

Pharmacy supervision webinar

Presented by the NPA
Pharmacy Advice and Support Team

28th April 2026

Slides expiry date 30th September 2026



Context

- The Human Medicines (Authorisation by Pharmacists and Supervision by Pharmacy Technicians) Order 2025: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2025/1249/contents/made>
- Introduces enabling changes that permits pharmacists to issue authorisations for specific activities
- There is no legal obligation to use authorisations
- The changes to the supervision legislation are not about allowing ‘remote’ supervision, or removing the need for pharmacists to carry out appropriate clinical checks linked to the dispensing process - pharmacists must still carry out the clinical check on a prescription to make sure that it is appropriate for the patient
- CPE confirmed on 23 December 2025 – *the change coming into force on 7 January 2026 may be used by/is applicable to NHS community pharmacies, without any change to the Terms of Service (The NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013) - this has been confirmed with the Department of Health and Social Care*

7 Dec 2023 to 29 Feb 2024
Public consultation open

Supervision timeline

2025



17 Jul 2025

Govt response to public consultation published

And

The draft Order is laid: [The Human Medicines \(Authorisation by Pharmacists and Supervision by Pharmacy Technicians\) Order 2025](#)

2026

07 January 2026 - UK

Pharmacist can authorise any competent member of the pharmacy team to hand out checked and bagged prescriptions in the absence of a pharmacist

10 December 2026 - GB

- Enabling pharmacists to authorise a pharmacy technician to undertake or supervise others in the preparation, assembly, dispensing and sale and supply of medicines
- Enabling pharmacy technicians to take responsibility for the preparation and assembly of medicinal products in hospital aseptic facilities

RPS developed guidance to support the implementation for [‘Authorisation by a pharmacist who is absent or treated as absent – handing out checked and bagged prescription’](#)

GPhC held a public consultation on its proposed new standards and rules, and will develop and introduce new regulatory standards for SPs and RPs and Rules for RPs

Royal College of Pharmacy to develop guidance to support the implementation of the new standards and rules

Authorisation: handing out checked and bagged prescriptions

- **Only a pharmacist is legally permitted to issue an authorisation to pharmacy team members to hand out checked and bagged prescriptions when the pharmacist is absent/treated as absent**
 - Pharmacy support staff - include dispensers/medicines counter assistants, accuracy checkers or pharmacy technicians
 - Items can only be issued under the authorisation within the specified time period of authorisation
- **“Checked and bagged”** means the POM or P medicine has been clinically checked by the pharmacist, dispensed and accuracy checked by or under the supervision of a pharmacist **and** is ready to hand out to the patient or their representative if the pharmacist is absent or treated as being absent
- **Absent/absence:** Pharmacist being temporarily absent from the premises, for example, on a rest break
- **Treated as being absent:** Pharmacist being present at the pharmacy premises but not available to intervene in or not in a position to intervene in, the transaction in question. For instance, if they’re carrying out a service in the consultation room and cannot be interrupted, they’re treated as being absent

Pharmacist authorisation: Checked and bagged prescriptions (UK)

From 7 January 2026

- A pharmacist can authorise competent pharmacy team members to hand out checked and bagged prescriptions when absent or treated as absent

Terminology (in the context of handing out checked and bagged prescriptions)

- Checked and bagged
- Absent or treated as absent

Authorisation

- Optional
- Orally or in writing
- Subject to conditions and restrictions
- Only the pharmacist who has given the authorisation can withdraw or amend it
- Given in regard to patient safety

Key points

- Another pharmacist can intervene or stop a supply from being made
- Pharmacy staff should be able to refuse authorisation if they feel they are not confident, or it is unsafe to hand out
- Responsible Pharmacist (RP), Superintendent Pharmacist (SP) and the authorising pharmacist roles are distinct, and each is professionally accountable for their own role
- RP regulations have not changed

Implementation

- SOP
- Risk assessment
- Escalation and intervention processes
- Training
- Audit
- Communication
- Establish a process for documenting authorisation (record keeping)

Record keeping

What should be recorded

- Date and time
- Authorising pharmacist name and registration number
- Authorised pharmacy team member(s) name and role
- Signature of both authorising pharmacist and pharmacist team member
- Duration of authorisation
- Scope of authorisation
- Withdrawal and amendments
- Location the authorisation relates to

Other key points

- Electronic or paper
- Alterations and amendments are identifiable
- Should be kept for 5 years
- Made by the authorising pharmacist



Authorisation: handing out checked and bagged prescriptions

Refresher training: Handing out checked and bagged dispensed prescription items in the absence of a pharmacist*

*Under the authorisation of the pharmacist



- Support staff should have completed training appropriate for their role
- The NPA has developed refresher training covers key points to be aware of when handing out dispensed medicines to patients
- Note that this training is designed to supplement a GPhC accredited training course, not replace it, and should also be considered in the context of the pharmacy's SOPs
- Covers scenarios such as managing high-risk medicines, situations that may require pharmacist intervention

NPA Insurance (NPAI)

- **NPA Insurance are/will be covering delegated supervision**
- Who is liable for claims arising out of delegation will depend on how tasks have been delegated and the facts of the individual case.
- Still waiting for final details / regulations to be published from GPhC on what is going to be allowed / good practice, so too early for specifics.

Who will be accountable if a pharmacy technician makes an error after being authorised by a pharmacist to carry out a particular task? ^

Pharmacists will not be obliged to authorise others to perform tasks. The legal changes are enabling and not mandatory, and so pharmacists will have the choice to decide whether to authorise others.

If pharmacists do decide to authorise a pharmacy technician to carry out or supervise tasks relating to the preparation, assembly, dispensing, sale and supply of medicines, the pharmacist and the person receiving the authorisation will both carry responsibility for the tasks performed under an authorisation.

Each parties' respective responsibility and accountability for the acts performed will depend on the circumstances. Guidance on authorisations may be produced in due course by professional bodies such as the Royal Pharmaceutical Society to support pharmacists.

Will there still need to be a Responsible Pharmacist physically present at every community pharmacy? ^

The legal changes will not change the requirement for there to be a Responsible Pharmacist on duty at each pharmacy nor do they permit a pharmacy technician to perform the role of the Responsible Pharmacist. The changes are not intended to allow a Responsible Pharmacist to be absent from the pharmacy for longer than two hours and they do not allow for the Responsible Pharmacist to supervise pharmacy staff remotely.

The changes are also not intended to remove the need for pharmacists to undertake appropriate clinical checks linked to the dispensing process, for example, carrying out the clinical check on a prescription.

Liability: according to GPhC

<https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/pharmacies/standards-and-guidance-registered-pharmacies/legislation-pharmacy-supervision-faqs>

Hot questions

Under the new legislation from 7 January 2026, can pharmacists authorise pharmacy staff to sell Pharmacy (P) medicines when they are absent?

No. The new legislation does not allow pharmacy staff to sell Pharmacy (P) medicines in the absence of the pharmacist.

How does this change impact the Responsible Pharmacist (RP) regulations?

The RP regulations have not changed. A RP is still required to be signed in at each pharmacy. The permitted absence from the pharmacy premises under the RP regulations remains at a maximum of 2 hours during the pharmacy's business hours.

Can a pharmacist be the RP for more than one pharmacy at the same time?

No. A pharmacist can only be the RP for one pharmacy at any given time. When signed in, the RP is fully accountable for the safe and effective running of the pharmacy, and this responsibility cannot be shared across multiple pharmacies.

Can the Superintendent Pharmacist (SP) or the owner make the authorisation on behalf of the pharmacist?

No, only the pharmacist working at the pharmacy can make the authorisation.

Our current understanding

While the legislation doesn't explicitly state that sign-in and sign-out must be done with physical presence, our interpretation is that the RP role and associated duties are dependent on physical attendance at the pharmacy premises. Our current understanding is that:

- A pharmacist would need to be physically present in the pharmacy when assuming the RP role
- The RP must sign in onsite, after which the two-hour absence provisions may be applied where appropriate
- The RP must remain signed in until the pharmacy closes; the absence rules cannot be used to leave or sign out early unless another RP takes over
- The RP remains responsible for the safe and effective running of the pharmacy for the duration of the time they are signed in
- The legislation does not provide for remote RP sign-in or sign-out, nor for remote supervision

Further reading and information

- Legislation: The Human Medicines (Authorisation by Pharmacists and Supervision by Pharmacy Technicians) Order 2025: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2025/1249/contents/made>
- RPS: Authorisation by a pharmacist – checked and bagged prescriptions: <https://www.rpharms.com/resources/pharmacy-guides/authorisation-checked-bagged>
- GPhC Legislation on pharmacy supervision: FAQs: <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/pharmacies/standards-and-guidance-registered-pharmacies/legislation-pharmacy-supervision-faqs>
- Consultation on draft rules for Responsible Pharmacists and standards for Responsible Pharmacists and Superintendent Pharmacists: <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/pharmacies/standards-and-guidance-registered-pharmacies/legislation-pharmacy-supervision-faqs>
- PSNI: Pharmaceutical Society NI welcomes new Pharmacy Supervision legislation: <https://psni.org.uk/pharmaceutical-society-ni-welcomes-new-pharmacy-supervision-legislation/>
- PFNI: Guidance on Pharmacist Authorisation: Supply of Checked and Bagged Medicines: <https://www.pfni.org.uk/optimising-medicines-for-people-in-secure-environments-2/>

List of NPA supervision resources to support implementation

- DRAFT SOP - Handing out checked and bagged prescriptions in pharmacist's absence
- DRAFT Risk assessment template-Handing out checked and bagged prescriptions in the pharmacist's absence
- Supervision learning: Authorisation to hand out checked and bagged prescriptions (UK) (slides)
- Supervision explainer: Authorisation to hand out checked and bagged prescriptions (UK) (recording)
- Supervision changes and your questions answered
- Supervision – Pharmacist authorisation record log
- Webinar recording (13/01/26) - Understanding the new supervision legislation: Allowing authorisation of handing out of checked and bagged prescriptions

- Webinar slides (13/01/26) - Understanding the new supervision legislation: Allowing authorisation of handing out of checked and bagged prescriptions
- Refresher training guide on handing out checked and bagged medicines

Supervision resources: <https://portal.npa.co.uk/npaportal/s/article/Supervision-Resources> (login)

NPA support and resources for NPA members

- Supervision resources:
<https://portal.npa.co.uk/npaportal/s/article/Supervision-Resources> (login)

We are here to support you.

NPA members can contact the NPA Advice and Support team if you have any queries

Email: pharmacyservices@npa.co.uk

Telephone: 01727 891800 (Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm)