

WORKING AS A PHARMACIST DURING COVID-19:

Community pharmacy teams are on the frontline in providing medicines and health advice to many people but there have been multiple challenges of late. Initially some people were abusive but as the NHS has been recognised and respected, the attitude of people towards us has improved. Patients are being grateful and appreciative of the work and hours we are doing to ensure their medication is dispensed and delivered.

Our working practices have changed and due to long hours there is now flexibility in place to allow community pharmacies to regulate their hours. By closing during set periods of each day we can catch up on dispensing prescriptions and give advice over the phone.

To support community pharmacies at this time of pressure there has been a ceased requirement for clinical audits which has eased administrative reporting to reduce the burden of bureaucracy on pharmacies.

There has also been to a degree a lapse on the services we offer in order to reduce some workload - these would include Medicine Use Reviews, Emergency Hormonal Contraception, New Medicine Service, Minor Ailment Services, Travel vaccinations to name a few.

I work for "Boots" and they are now creating "Safe Space" for domestic abuse victims seeking help during the pandemic.

Victims of domestic abuse will be able to seek help in our pharmacies - the consultation room will serve as the safe space so they can access support needed.

There is an app Bright Sky that is excellent in guiding people seeking help and gives contacts and telephone numbers. The consultation room will also have posters giving information on seeking help.

The Victim's Commissioner Dame Vera Baird who spoke at our last Regional meeting had called for more creative thinking on how to help victims during lockdown.

As Regional Safeguarding Officer I welcomed the new measures particularly when presently options for victims are more limited than usual and pharmacies can provide the safe environment needed to get support.

Thankfully "Boots" have been excellent in promptly supplying us with the necessary PPE and protective Perspex screens, disinfectants etc. I do feel safe at work.

We do have the privilege of being classed as "Keyworkers" which has enabled us to access shopping times dedicated to NHS staff which has been greatly appreciated. I have also been humbled each Thursday evening by the amount of clapping and support for the NHS, it means so much.



I have been qualified for 38 years and I have never come across such unprecedented times. I class them as the most challenging times in my whole career as a pharmacist. I admit at times it has been very emotional.

I thank everyone for their support and hope you are all safe and well.

My best wishes to you all,
Barbara Myers