**Managing complaints about prescription direction**

‘Prescription direction’ occurs where a patient is directed by their GP practice to a certain pharmacy to have their prescription dispensed. The BMA, Pharmacy Voice and PSNC have published a joint statement stating that prescription direction should not take place. Prescription direction undermines a patient’s right to have a free choice between any community pharmacy, and damages trust and cooperation between healthcare professionals.

NHS England (which manages the contracts with GPs and pharmacies) and the General Medical Council and General Pharmaceutical Council (the professional regulators) all have a role in stepping in to challenge cases of prescription direction. They generally need to hear from patients before they will take action.

If any of your patients complain about undue pressure to use a particular pharmacy, you can use the *“Your Prescription Your Choice”* leaflet to help them to easily register a complaint.

If you become aware that a patient has been subjected to prescription direction:

1. Explain that doctors and pharmacists across the country have agreed that this is not the right way to behave – patients should always be free to choose their pharmacy, and no-one should seek to undermine that right
2. That if certain GPs or pharmacies locally are behaving in this way, that this needs to be reported so that something can be done to stop it
3. Offer them the *“Your Prescription Your Choice”* form, explaining that it contains information about this problem and gives them the opportunity to report what has happened to them
4. Advise them that the back half of the form can be detached and submitted to the appropriate body. They can submit the form themselves, or ask you to do it for them
5. Encourage them to complete the form in the pharmacy, and say that you’ll send their form off for them, along with any other forms that you receive, to save them the cost of a stamp or phone call

*Please respect the right of patients not to complain if they are uncomfortable in doing so. Please also recognise that you should treat any interactions with patients on this topic as confidential.*

Once forms have been returned to you, the next steps are:

1. Send the form to NHS England in all cases.
2. If there is evidence that a GP may have acted inappropriately, a copy of the form should be sent to the General Medical Council.
3. If there is evidence that a pharmacist or pharmacy company may have acted inappropriately, a copy of the form should be sent to the General Pharmaceutical Council.
4. We suggest that you keep a log of the forms that you have sent off. The following page includes a template log.

The full BMA, Pharmacy Voice and PSNC statement on prescription direction is available at:

<http://www.pharmacyvoice.com/images/press/BMA_PSNC_PV_prescription_direction_guidance_October_13.pdf>

**Confidential log of prescription direction complaints**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date received | Name | Address | Dispatch details | | | | |
| Date sent | Tick as appropriate | | | |
| Head Office | NHS England | GMC | GPhC |
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