



Pharmacy First: More Than Minor Ailments — Spotting Red Flags, Saving Lives

To all our dedicated pharmacy teams across West Yorkshire, this is your success story! Over the past year, you have delivered over 200,000 Pharmacy First consultations, ensuring accessible, expert care while helping to reduce pressure on GPs and hospitals.

Your expertise has ensured that 84%, (just under 170,000 patients), have had their conditions safely managed within pharmacy — but your impact goes far beyond minor ailments. You've identified red flags, escalated serious cases, and potentially saved lives, proving that Pharmacy First is a vital frontline service.



Your Work in Action: Examples of Local Real Case Scenarios



Preventing Dangerous Infections

A female patient arrived with a boil-like lesion on her upper chest, which was red, hot, and swollen—signs of infection. Recognizing the urgency, the pharmacist referred her to the GP, who escalated her care to A&E for same-day hospital treatment. She underwent surgery and a 24-hour hospital stay, preventing severe complications.

Escalating Urgent Ear Conditions

A young girl came to the pharmacy with severe ear pain and swelling, unable to tolerate touch near the affected area. The pharmacist recognised signs of mastoiditis, a condition requiring urgent intervention. An emergency GP appointment was arranged, leading to hospital admission and IV antibiotics, ensuring a full recovery.

Spotting Lyme Disease Before It Progressed

A patient was referred via NHS 111 on a Saturday morning for an infected skin lesion. During consultation, the pharmacist discovered the patient had recently walked through fields wearing shorts. Identifying a bulls-eye rash, the pharmacist suspected Lyme disease, immediately escalating the case to out-of-hours care. Hospital tests confirmed Lyme disease, and the patient was swiftly treated with a three-week course of antibiotics, preventing long-term complications.

Protecting Vision in Shingles Patients

An adult female visited the pharmacy, believing she had a spider bite near her eyebrow. The pharmacist provided safety-netting advice and asked her to return if symptoms worsened. When she returned days later, she had 3–4 reddish-purple lesions extending into her hairline, along with increasing pain. Recognizing shingles, the pharmacist arranged a same-day GP referral, ensuring she received antivirals and an urgent ophthalmology review—preventing complications that could have affected her eyesight.

Your Role as Patient Safety Champions – Every day, you treat and reassure patients and serve as the first line of defence in identifying serious conditions and ensuring urgent care pathways are activated when necessary. Your clinical expertise, dedication, and commitment to patient safety have made a huge difference to your patients.

A Huge Thank You!

Your hard work, clinical expertise, and commitment to patient care have strengthened Pharmacy First and made it a trusted, life-saving service. Because of you, thousands of patients have received the right care at the right time — and avoided delays that could have worsened their health.

Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire is proud of your achievements and have shared your success stories with LMCs and the local Healthwatch. Let's continue to build on this success, ensuring that every patient benefits from the incredible work you do. Thank you for being the driving force behind Pharmacy First!



info@cpwy.org



0113 272 7560



www.cpwy.org



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Telegram



@CPWYInfo



Community Pharmacy
West Yorkshire (CPWY)