

Joint BOPA and PASG Position Statement

Safer Handling of Hazardous SACT Drugs: A Pharmacy Workforce Position Statement

The British Oncology Pharmacy Association (BOPA)* and the NHS Pharmaceutical Aseptic Services Group (PASG)[†] are committed to supporting safe and effective practices in the preparation, handling, administration and waste disposal of Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy (SACT) and cytotoxic medicines. Protecting both patients and the pharmacy workforce remains a central priority in the delivery of high-quality oncology care.

BOPA and PASG recognises the importance of continued national dialogue regarding the safe handling of hazardous medicinal products across all stages of the medicine's pathway. There is clear consensus that staff exposure to these medicines must be minimised through safe systems of work, appropriate equipment, and robust governance arrangements.

Recent discussions within the wider healthcare community, including pharmacy and nursing colleagues, have highlighted the need for further exploration of how best to achieve this in practice. BOPA and PASG acknowledge that existing evidence and practice vary across organisations and that further collaborative work is needed to develop clear, practical, and evidence-informed guidance for the UK.

Accordingly, BOPA and PASG support a review of the preparation, handling, administration and waste disposal of SACT and cytotoxic drugs to:

- Clarify the current evidence base surrounding risks of occupational exposure and control measures including the use of closed system transfer devices (CSTDs) to mitigate those risks
- Understand the operational impact and feasibility of potential approaches; and
- Ensure any future recommendations for safe practice strike the right balance between safety, capacity, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

BOPA and PASG remain committed to working collaboratively with partner organisations, regulators, the wider multidisciplinary team and commercial companies to ensure that future guidance is proportionate, evidence-based, and safeguards both staff and patients from avoidable harm.

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* The British Oncology Pharmacy Association is the professional organisation for cancer pharmacy specialists in the UK.

[†] The NHS Pharmaceutical Aseptic Services Group acts as an expert and informed body on NHS pharmacy-based aseptic preparation.

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Title		Safer Handling of Hazardous SACT Drugs – A Pharmacy Workforce Position Statement	
Authors/Editors		Netty Cracknell / Joe Williams / Louisa Knowles / John Landers	
Owner		BOPA / PASG	
Endorsed by the BOPA exec committee		3 rd November 2025	
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Change History			
Version	Date	Lead Author/Editor	Summary of Changes
1.0	October 2025	Netty Cracknell / Joe Williams / Louisa Knowles / John Landers	1 st version
Proposed Target Audience	- Hospital pharmacists, oncology/haematology pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, pharmaceutical scientists, science manufacturing technicians and pharmacy assistants involved in SACT and cytotoxic drug handling. - Chief pharmacists, aseptic services managers, and pharmacy operational leads. - Pharmacy support workers involved in transport, storage, and waste management of SACT and cytotoxic drugs. - Medicines safety officers (MSOs) and medication governance teams. - Occupational health professionals in healthcare settings. - Oncology nurses, medical oncologists, and other multidisciplinary team members with shared handling responsibilities. - Educators and trainers developing pharmacy workforce competencies in safe handling of hazardous drugs. - Policy makers and regulatory bodies influencing occupational safety standards for hazardous medicinal products.		
Proposed Circulation List	- BOPA Membership - Chief Pharmacists - UK NHS Pharmaceutical Aseptic Services Group (PASG) - Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) - Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK) - UK Oncology Nursing Society (UKONS) - Royal College of Nursing (RCN) - Clinical Directors of Pharmacy - SACT governance leads - Universities / training centres delivering postgraduate oncology and aseptic courses - Occupational Health Leads - UK Government: Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) - Cabinet Office Health and Safety policy leads. - Members of Parliament with an interest in health, cancer, workforce safety, and pharmacy. - Health Committees in devolved administrations (Scottish Parliament, Welsh Senedd, Northern Ireland Assembly). - All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) on Cancer, Pharmacy, and Occupational Safety & Health.		
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