

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

Bulletin No.2- G27

Source Christian Institute

The individual at a branch of Lloyds Pharmacy directed a customer to another pharmacy but the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) claimed such decisions ‘threaten women’s health’. The morning-after pill can cause abortions. Pharmacists are allowed to decline to dispense it under guidance from the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), updated after The Christian Institute threatened legal action.

Concerned

The woman who requested the drug at a Brighton store told the Metro newspaper she felt it was unacceptable.

Lloyds Pharmacy said the pharmacist was a locum, rather than a full-time employee, and added that it was very concerned about the situation.

But in a statement, it said the company abides by “GPhC guidelines which allow pharmacists to refuse to dispense medication that goes against their personal beliefs if there is adequate alternative care available for the patient”.

Shop shelf

Abortion giant BPAS responded furiously to the situation, tweeting: “It’s impossible to overstate how significant this kind of refusal is. It threatens women’s health.

“It totally illustrates why women should not be reliant on pharmacists to access the morning after pill.

“It should be available straight from the shop shelf.”

Positive contribution

Previous draft guidance from the GPhC could have forced Christians to provide access to abortifacient or hormone-blocking drugs.

But in 2017, in response to a public consultation, The Christian Institute said that freedom of conscience is protected by law, and therefore the GPhC has a responsibility to reasonably accommodate different beliefs.

In a statement accompanying the new guidance change, the GPhC highlighted the positive contribution pharmacists’ faith can make in their position of care.

“We recognise and respect that a pharmacy professional’s religion, personal values and beliefs are often central to their lives and can make a positive contribution to their providing safe and effective care to a diverse population.”

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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