



Fifty shades of grey

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In light of recent events in the North West, I am compelled to agree that the situation is political. We as an Association have united in support of those affected, whether pharmacy staff or patients, by the protests. However, it was easier to choose not to use our voice or participate in the correction of this unfairness. The choosing of neutrality because a certain issue does not impact one directly is similar to the grey colour which is defined as a colour that is truly unattached, neutral,

impartial; a colour commonly associated with conformity, boredom and indecision.

Most organisations increasingly state their desire to be impartial in politically volatile situations. However, if we as an Association of pharmacy professionals choose to remain neutral in this North West saga, it would still be defined as a political stance. It is political because in a way it conforms to the current political climate and informs us that we are more concerned with not dividing our members as opposed to

being on the right side of history. This though does not mean that as pharmacists we are now politicians, but it necessitates that we become politically aware. Neutrality will not fix the medicine shortages, the harassed and demoralised staff and the long-term effects these protests will yield.

Pharmacists can remain neutral but there is a politically-charged aesthetic such as humanity that still coincides with politics. "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter" (Martin Luther King) – this quote provides a perspective that bluntly outlines the harm caused by neutrality. This kind of position we find ourselves in then requires us to discover new ways of building a culture of active response. Some of the ways include speaking out against any and all unfairness, especially if it prevents us as an association and our members from contributing towards alleviating the suffering of all people in the nation through the practice of our profession.

If we are to operate on a fence that we need to be neutral and avoid confronting unfair situations, then we should be prepared to keep solving the same symptoms of unfairness repeatedly. Makes you think – which shade of grey suits you?