

Dear Pharmacist,

Thank you for your continued support to the people who use our services, and our teams in services, as we continue to navigate the challenges the coronavirus pandemic has brought to us all.

Supervised consumption fees

As you will be aware, we have agreed to pay supervised consumption fees each month since March, based on 100% of February's supervised consumption fees. We can confirm we shall continue to pay this amount until the end of September. We hope this arrangement will give you time to plan and put into place measures to allow supervised consumption services to resume as normal soon.

For pharmacies where supervised consumption activity is higher than that from February, we will of course pay the fees for the additional activity undertaken.

Providing supervised consumption services

We understand that it may be difficult to provide a supervised consumption service in the 'usual' manner currently, with social distancing and keeping people safe being a priority, and that in some pharmacies it may not be possible to provide supervised consumption services at all at this time.

There are occasions where it is important that a person has their medication dose supervised, for example, during titration of MAT. Where supervised consumption is being provided by the pharmacy, we ask that wherever possible consultation rooms are used as usual, as this offers the most discreet and confidential means of delivering the service. In rare cases, we accept that this may not be possible, and you may use your professional judgement to provide supervised consumption elsewhere within the pharmacy. First and foremost, the service user must consent to this, and secondly this must be undertaken in a respectful and appropriate manner. If your pharmacy is not able to utilise the consultation room for supervised consumption, please notify the prescribing service in advance to enable them to make appropriate decisions relating to the prescribing for the person. We are happy to work with pharmacies to identify acceptable alternative ways of providing supervised consumption to our service users.

In the interest of the safety of our service users, we ask that supervised consumption instructions on prescriptions are followed – if the prescription requests this and it cannot be provided, please liaise with the prescribing service to make sure they are aware the person cannot have their doses observed in the pharmacy. Additionally, where a person has previously had supervised consumption and this is no longer requested on the prescription, please do not supervise them. Deviating from requests to either supervise or not supervise can introduce risk for the person receiving the medication.

Reviewing dispensing regimes for our service users

We intend to learn from the prescribing plan followed during COVID to improve the service user experience ongoing. Our learning so far has shown that a large proportion of our service users have benefitted from receiving larger quantities of MAT at a time, which has allowed them to self-manage their medication and they have felt empowered to take control of their treatment. In some cases, this has helped some people to review their current plan and consider reducing and ultimately detoxing from their medication. However, we have also found that some people have not coped as well with managing larger quantities of take-home medication.

As we head into the next phase of easing lockdown and social distancing measures, we will be planning for the longer-term. We will be reviewing each individual's prescribing to determine the best dispensing arrangements for that person, with the overarching aim of them having the least restrictive dispensing arrangement which is appropriate for them.

Future working with our pharmacy partners

Change Grow Live really value our successful partnership working with community pharmacies, and through COVID we have learned and demonstrated how we can work better together. With that in mind we would like to grasp any future opportunity which allows us to utilise the amazing position pharmacies hold in the community and the knowledge pharmacy teams have to deliver other services which will really benefit service users using a quality-based approach. We will ensure we stay in communication with pharmacies and LPCs and hope to build on what we have already achieved to do things better for our service users.

We are always more than happy to support pharmacies, please feel free to get in touch if you feel we can help you in some way.

Many thanks,

Mohammed Fessal
Chief Pharmacist
Change Grow Live