CPN

Community Pharmacy News – **March 2021**

COVID-19: One year since lockdown

MPs come out in support of pharmacies as PSNC continues to fight for their COVID costs to be fully covered

Distribution of C-19 tests | Changes to Delivery Service | Prescription charge increase

Chief Executive's blog

Ahead of the start of negotiations on the CPCF for 2021/22, PSNC CEO Simon Dukes considers the contribution pharmacies have made to the success of this season's flu vaccination programme.

Simon Dukes
PSNC Chief Executive

Tucked away in a recent email from NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) was a short message of thanks to pharmacies and GP practices along with some updated data. The topic of the update was this season's flu vaccination success, with pharmacies being thanked for their contributions to the programme. The data showed that the flu vaccine had been given to more than 19 million people this season – that's over 4 million more than last year.

All well and good. Yet a further dig into PSNC-held vaccination data shows just how much community pharmacies have contributed to the success of this important programme. As of 22nd March this year, pharmacies had administered over 2.6 million of those jabs. We know that our data, provided by PharmOutcomes and Sonar, slightly undercounts the actual numbers of people vaccinated by pharmacies – last year our numbers peaked at 1.5 million, but the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) reported that pharmacies vaccinated 1.7 million people – so this figure may be nearer 3 million.

> **"Pharmacies administered over 2.6 million flu jabs this season"**

You will already be ahead of me, but that means community pharmacies have vaccinated over 1 million more people than last season. That represents about 25% of the overall growth in the flu vaccination programme this season – far more than our usual share of around 10-12% of the total programme. That means we have far surpassed general practice this year in terms of growing the flu vaccination service that we offer. In fact, in September alone, community pharmacy jabbed nearly 1 million patients.

> **"That represents about 25% of the overall growth in the flu vaccination programme"**

To achieve this sort of growth in any circumstances would be impressive, but to do so during a pandemic, alongside the severe financial pressures contractors are under, while continuing to dispense a billion prescriptions and offer healthcare advice to more than a million people every week, is nothing short of phenomenal. It shows just how committed pharmacies are to their patients, finding innovative ways of working, and delivering on NHS priorities in very challenging circumstances.

None of this will be a surprise to anyone who works in a community pharmacy. But as we look towards the start of the delayed negotiations on year 3 of the five-year Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) deal, this has never been more important. We need the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHSE&I to come into these negotiations ready not only to demand what pharmacies can do for the NHS, but to talk about what investment is needed in order for pharmacies to do even more. To quote a senior and influential MP I was talking to the other day: "I have never seen an inefficient pharmacy" – I'm not sure there are many other places in the NHS where that applies?

If pharmacies are to better support patients and the rest of the NHS, I would suggest that there are few better places to start than vaccinations. Pharmacies' track record on flu is second to none. We already know that the NHS wants to look to us for help with travel vaccinations. And pharmacies, as the most accessible NHS healthcare locations, are ideally placed to take on the burden of annual COVID-19 boosters as and when those are needed, leaving general practitioners free to return to the vital task of seeing their patients and saving lives. It is a natural progression to be involved in other vaccinations too.

Why should anyone need to go anywhere other than a pharmacy for a jab?

> **"It is a natural progression to be involved in other vaccinations too"**

March Meeting of LPCs and PSNC

On 17th March, PSNC held a meeting for LPCs to update them on PSNC's work, hear from the group taking forward the recommendations from the independent review into PSNC and LPCs, and provide opportunities for sharing best practice.

Information and resources from the day are now available in the LPC Members Area of the PSNC website.

MPs back pharmacy

One year on from the first coronavirus lockdown, MPs call for greater financial support for pharmacies during a Parliamentary debate.

"APPG Chair leads debate praising work of pharmacy teams"

MPs from across all political parties expressed their support and appreciation for community pharmacies earlier this month, during a Westminster Hall debate on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector.

Jackie Doyle-Price, Conservative MP for Thurrock and Chair of the All-Party Pharmacy Group (APPG) led the debate, which was attended by MPs across multiple political parties, all of whom spoke passionately about their local pharmacies and the sector's response to the pandemic. Many drew on the recommendations of the **APPG's December 2020 inquiry** and also questioned whether the financial support offered by the Government for the sector has been sufficient.

All the MPs spoke highly of their local pharmacies, particularly regarding their important role in providing patients with healthcare advice. Many also praised the contribution of pharmacy teams in the COVID-19 vaccination programme so far, calling for a greater role for pharmacies in the long term. Some said they wanted to see many thousands of pharmacies administering vaccinations, while others stressed the important role pharmacies could play in the future, should booster vaccinations be required.

But alongside the praise for the positive work pharmacies have been doing throughout the pandemic, MPs also discussed the financial pressures facing the sector and warned of the risks if no further action is taken. Many voiced particular concern about the implications of asking pharmacy contractors to repay some of the £370m advance payments.

The debate followed work by PSNC, LPCs and others to brief Parliamentarians on the financial pressures facing community pharmacies. This work will continue, alongside national media work, as we continue to press for contractors to be fully compensated for the impact that the pandemic has had on their businesses.

PSNC CEO vlog

PSNC Chief Executive Simon Dukes has recorded a video blog (or 'vlog') about the pharmacy debate in Parliament. Highlighting just some of the support shown during the debate, Simon reports that MPs from across the country spoke about how valued community pharmacies are by their constituents.

Watch the video: ow.ly/fZGq30rBSfK

Briefing MPs on COVID-19 costs

Despite having spent an extra £400m so far to deliver NHS care in a COVID-safe way, community pharmacies are still waiting for these costs to be covered.

Ahead of the Budget, PSNC had called upon the Chancellor to intervene in ongoing COVID-19 funding negotiations and ensure that pharmacies do not have to pay back the £370 million in emergency loans they received last year.

PSNC has also been working with LPCs to brief Parliamentarians on the funding situation for pharmacies, asking them to call on HM Government to cover contractors' COVID-19 costs. This work will continue in the coming months.

#Pharmacy24 social media event

An annual social media event celebrating the work of pharmacy will this year be focusing on the sector's contribution during the COVID-19 pandemic and on promoting diversity within the sector.

On **Wednesday 7th April 2021**, all pharmacy staff are invited to promote pharmacy by sharing examples of how they have been supporting their patients across all social media platforms with the hashtag **#Pharmacy24**. PSNC and others will also be supporting this event.

Find out more at: **ow.ly/dgVk30rBSqu**

Watch 'Your Representation, Your Say' on-demand

Community pharmacy contractors can now watch an on-demand version of the 'Your Representation, Your Say' engagement event hosted by the community pharmacy Review Steering Group (RSG) earlier this month.

This was the first engagement event held by the RSG, which is taking forward work following the independent review into contractor representation and support. Members of the RSG will reflect on the feedback gathered during the event, which will inform how the group engages with contractors over the coming months.

View the event recording at: **pharmacy-review.org**

DSP Terms of Service changes

From 1st April 2021, the NHS Terms of Service require Distance Selling Premises (DSP) pharmacies to have a website which includes content promoting healthy lifestyles.

In November last year, amended regulations introduced new requirements detailed in 14 **PSNC Regs Explainer articles**. One set of changes related to the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

DSPs are required to have a website containing a page providing up-to-date materials that address a reasonable range of health issues, clearly promoted from the site's homepage. Learn more at: **ow.ly/hIeB30rBRVk**

NHS Service Finder enhancements

NHS Digital has introduced improvements to its **NHS Service Finder** online search tool. The tool enables healthcare professionals, including pharmacy teams, to search for service information quickly, thereby making it easier to signpost patients to the correct service.

The latest changes include restyling of the search results list and service details to make them more navigable and consistent, and a new function to enable users to filter search results by type and opening hours.

PSNC requested that these changes be made and will continue to provide input to the NHS Service Finder team based on contractor feedback. Find out more at: **ow.ly/pk9W30rBRW4**

Ventilation of indoor spaces to reduce C-19 spread

New guidance has been published by the Department of health and Social Care (DHSC) on how ventilation in the workplace can help to stop the spread of COVID-19. The guidance explains the importance of identifying areas that are not well ventilated and gives examples of control measures for reducing the risk of airborne transmission.

The DHSC guidance follows an update to the Health and Safety Executive guidance for employers on Ventilation and air conditioning during the pandemic. Learn more at: **ow.ly/On7030rBh1G**

New C-19 test distribution service

Community pharmacies can begin distributing COVID-19 lateral flow devices to non-symptomatic patients as part of an NHS service from the end of this month.

> "Test kits for COVID-19 to be made available through pharmacies"

A new **Advanced service – the NHS community pharmacy COVID-19 lateral flow device distribution service** – will be added to the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) from 29th March 2021.

This service, which pharmacy contractors can choose to provide, aims to improve access to asymptomatic COVID-19 testing by making lateral flow device (LFD) test kits readily available at community pharmacies. People self-administer the tests away from the pharmacy, e.g. at home.

In marketing and communications materials aimed at the public, the service will be referred to as Pharmacy Collect and it will allow asymptomatic people to collect LFD test kits, free of charge, from community pharmacies, so they can undertake regular testing as part of the Government's **COVID-19 roadmap** plan. The most common circumstances that will prompt a person to undertake regular tests are:

- They are a child at school or are in a bubble with school children;
- They work at a school or are in a bubble with school staff;
- They have to leave the house for work;
- Their local council has advised them to test; or
- Their GP or another healthcare professional has advised them to test.

The pharmacy is not involved in the generation of test results, supporting the reporting of results or the next steps for the person taking the test.

Alastair Buxton, Director of NHS Services at PSNC, commented:
"This new service is designed to be easy for contractors to implement and provide, with the day-to-day transactions being managed by the pharmacy's counter team. PSNC and the Government hope that the majority of pharmacies in England will eventually sign up to provide the service, ensuring easy access to LFD test kits for the population."

Funding for the new service

The funding for this service comes from outside the pharmacy Global Sum and it is made up of the following elements:

1. An **early sign-up fee of £200** + VAT, for any contractors who sign up to provide the service **by 18th April 2021**.
2. A **one-off set-up fee of £250** + VAT, which covers set-up costs including creating a standard operating procedure for the service and training staff who will be involved in providing the service, and storage costs for the test kits ordered from wholesalers.
3. A **service fee of £1.50** + VAT per transaction.

Further information can be found at: **psnc.org.uk/LFD**

Update on Delivery Service

Funding for the Pandemic Delivery Service changes as patient cohort expanded to include those asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

> "Service updates add self-isolators and increases funding"

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have announced an extension to the group of patients entitled to assistance with the delivery of prescriptions, as part of the Pandemic Delivery Service. Additionally, following a request from PSNC, increased funding for the Essential service responsibilities has been agreed to reflect the larger number of patients now covered by the service.

From **Tuesday 16th March 2021**, people who have been notified of the need to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace will be able to seek support from community pharmacies under the Pandemic Delivery Service. This is part of a package of measures which the Government is putting in place to support people to self-isolate effectively and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

This means all pharmacies (excluding distance selling pharmacies) will be required to ensure those people who have been notified by NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate can receive their prescription medicines and appliances by home delivery during the ten-day self-isolation period, if they are unable to arrange for medicines to be picked up.

This service is only available to people during their ten-day self-isolation period and who can provide their NHS Test and Trace Account ID when requesting the service.
This service will be commissioned **until 23:59 on 30th June 2021**.

This change to the service eligibility criteria has no impact on the existing eligibility of clinically extremely vulnerable patients to receive support with deliveries; support for this group of patients continues until 23:59 on 31st March 2021.

Funding changes

PSNC has discussed the increases in the number of patients covered by the Pandemic Delivery Service with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and has agreed increased funding for the Essential service requirements.

The increase to the daily payment has been recalculated to reflect the growth in the number of people covered by the obligation to provide support with deliveries, whilst the separate Advanced service fee which can be claimed when a contractor delivers a prescription to an eligible patient remains unchanged.

Full details are available at: psnc.org.uk/deliveryservice

Ordering more LFDs for staff testing

NHSE&I have announced that all primary care contractors have been invited to place their second round of orders for lateral flow devices (LFDs). The invitations were sent by Primary Care Support England (PCSE) and the ordering process will work in the same manner as before.

Contractors are advised to place their orders on the **PCSE online portal** as soon as possible. Deliveries will start on 25th March and continue over the following two to three weeks.

Pharmacy teams are also reminded of the need to report all test results (negative, void or positive) on the **GOV.UK website**. This is a statutory notifiable disease reporting requirement.

Pharmacy offers C-19 vacs at football stadium

A pharmacy-run mass COVID-19 vaccination site at the University of Bolton Football Stadium has administered over 5,000 vaccines since the end of January.

Its location has formed a key part of the site's success so far, as people know where to find the stadium and it offers good access and parking. It is also a testament to the many local stakeholders involved, including the team at Whittle Pharmacies Ltd, Bolton LPC, the CCG, and the Bolton Wanderers Football Club.
Find out more at: **ow.ly/HEgd30rBh1C**

Payment timetable update

PSNC's **payment timetable and deadline tracker** has been updated to reflect the recent changes to the Pandemic Delivery Service.

This timetable has been specially designed to assist contractors with checking and claiming payments for services including the Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS) 2020/21 Part 2, GP Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS), and providing COVID-19 vaccinations.

Learn more at: **psnc.org.uk/paymenttimetable**

2021 GPhC pre-registration assessment

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) has announced that the provisional registration of pharmacists will be extended to January 2022, to enable trainees from the 2020/21 cohort to apply to join the provisional register once their training is satisfactorily completed.

The announcement was made as part of an update confirming the remaining registration assessment dates for 2021. Further information is available from: **ow.ly/Wzds30rBBhM**

PSNC **published advice on the issues** surrounding when provisionally registered pharmacists/pre-registration candidates may be ready to sit the GPhC assessment last month.

Free CPCS training

The RPS and the Royal College of GPs are providing free Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) workshops for pharmacists.

The workshops, funded by NHSE&I, via Health Education England, will help pharmacists to build their confidence and practice the skills they need to help people when providing the CPCS. Participants will get instant feedback from GPs and other professionals as well as learning how to involve patients during decision-making. Find out more at: **ow.ly/PZWE30rBBj1**

Co-working with NHSmail

Community pharmacies and GP practices in Widnes are collaborating more than ever after digitising their communications through a local NHSmail initiative.

Widnes Primary Care Network (PCN) engaged with local GP practices to create a list of NHSmail addresses for pharmacies to use. Shared NHSmail mailbox addresses were collected wherever possible as those are particularly helpful for times when individual staff may be unavailable.

The initiative has been supported by Community Pharmacy Halton, St Helens and Knowsley.Learn more at: **ow.ly/a5eb30rBBj4**

Pharmacy inclusivity plan

Professional bodies publish plan aiming to help develop and embed inclusive pharmacy professional practice into everyday care for patients and the public.

> "Action focusses on vaccine hesitancy and health inequalities"

A national plan outlining how the pharmacy sector can work together to embed inclusive practice into patient care has been published by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I), the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK).

The three bodies are urging pharmacy professionals in England to join efforts to deliver the plan, which aims to draw on the benefits of diversity to offer better healthcare provision. In recognition of the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on healthcare staff and communities from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, the plan focusses on addressing vaccine hesitancy and reducing health inequalities.

PSNC, as part of an advisory group of pharmacy partners, has collaborated with the RPS and APTUK on this plan, which builds on a **joint Statement of Principles published on World Pharmacists' Day 2020**. This group will continue to work together to put the joint plan into action, keeping its development under review at subsequent meetings.
A 'menu' of accredited training and resources will be developed over time, with help to support implementation available via the new **Inclusive Pharmacy Practice – FutureNHS Collaboration Platform**.

Read the Joint Plan for Inclusive Pharmacy Practice in England at: **ow.ly/UNv630rBBoO**

James Wood, Director of LPC and Contractor Support, said:
"Collectively with the other community pharmacy bodies, PSNC is proud to support efforts to embed inclusive pharmacy practice as outlined in the new joint plan. We are committed to continuing to work closely with the NHS and our fellow national pharmacy representatives to help community pharmacy to remain a sector that is accessible for everyone.

The plan provides opportunities to exchange learning and examples of best practice. Contractors and the pharmacy professionals in their teams may want to sign up to the dedicated collaboration space on FutureNHS, to keep in touch with the national work."

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Blog

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Dr Keith Ridge has posted a blog setting out how inclusive pharmacy practice will help the sector to both appreciate and harness the benefits of diversity.

Blog: Inclusive pharmacy practice

Pharmacy notice board

In this section of Community Pharmacy News we have highlighted some key notices for you and your team to be aware of in the coming weeks and months.

Help support Oxford/AZ vaccine study

As part of a series of measures to help protect the public, the Drug Safety Research Unit (DSRU) is now monitoring the safety of the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine by proactively collecting near 'real-time' data from patients receiving the vaccine. The DRSU aims to enrol at least 10,000 patients who will be contacted at regular intervals.

Find out how pharmacy teams can help: ~~ow.ly/KHOL30rBFjw~~

AMS virtual event

Public Health England (PHE) will be hosting a virtual event on antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) on Tuesday 30th March 2021 at 7pm.

The online event will focus on shared learning from community pharmacists who have been using the TARGET antibiotic checklist and other AMS tools in community pharmacy.

Register for this event at: ow.ly/B7mU30rBFn8

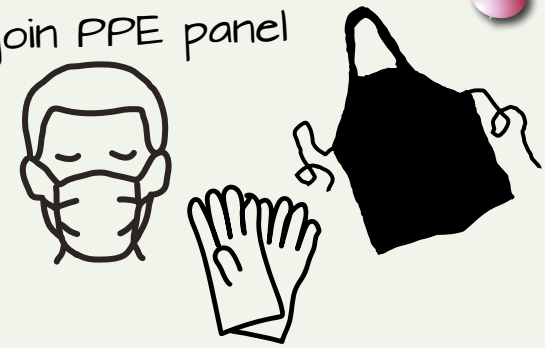
Palliative care e-course

The Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) has launched a Fundamentals of palliative care e-course.

The course aims to support pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to provide a person-centred holistic approach to palliative care, which goes beyond the supply of medicines.

Learn more at: ow.ly/6BY230rBFkT

Pharmacy staff invited to join PPE panel



Last year the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) established a COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) engagement panel to gather feedback from pharmacies. However, DHSC is looking for more contributors to join the panel, particularly Pharmacy Technicians and dispensing staff.

Feedback from the panel will be used to inform central analysis and improvement plans.

Find out how to join: ow.ly/Dzua30rBFqA

Prescription charge rises

PSNC publishes resources to help pharmacy teams communicate increases in NHS prescription charge costs to their patients.

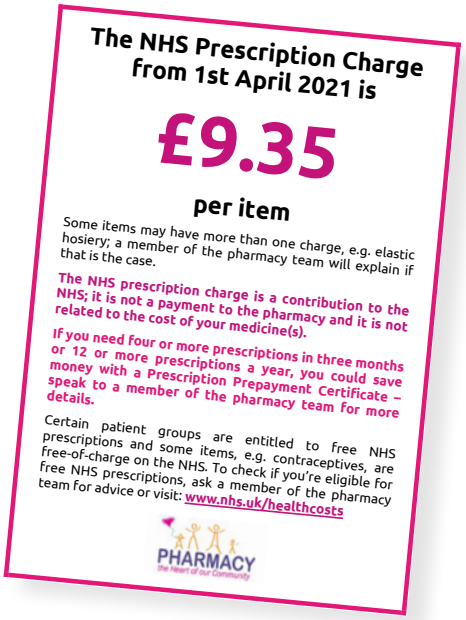
In England, the NHS prescription charge will increase to **£9.35** per prescription item from 1st April 2021.

Amendments to the National Health Service (Charges for Drugs and Appliances) Regulations have been laid before Parliament which will introduce changes for both the NHS prescription charge and prescription prepayment certificates (PPCs).

PSNC has designed an NHS Prescription Charge Card that can be displayed in community pharmacies. The card is **available to download** in colour or black and white. A copy of the colour version is on **CPN page 12**.

In addition to the increase in prescription charges, the cost of **prescription prepayment certificates** (PPCs) will also increase from 1st April 2021. The price of a three-month PPC will become **£30.25** and a 12-month PPC will be **£108.10**.

PSNC has also designed a poster explaining the savings that PPCs could achieve for patients that regularly pay for their prescriptions. This can be downloaded from: **psnc.org.uk/chargecard**



Note: Pharmacies that are registered to sell PPCs should ensure that all PPCs sold in March 2021 are entered and submitted on the **PPC Pharmacy sales application** before 1st April 2021 to avoid being charged the new PPC rates from their deductions.

Dispensing and Supply News

Our Dispensing and Supply Team highlights the latest news, information and guidance that community pharmacy teams should be aware of.

Smartcard access to MYS portal ending

From 18th April 2021, users of Manage Your Service (MYS) will **no longer** be able to access the **MYS portal** using their NHS Smartcards. Smartcard users must register to access MYS using their NHSmail login credentials before 11.59pm on Sunday 18th April 2021.

To register for MYS access using NHSmail, contractors must download and complete the form on the **NHS Business Services Authority's (NHSBSA) website** and send it to **nhsbsa.mys@nhs.net**. To find out more, visit **psnc.org.uk/nhsmail**

Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) updates

On 24th March, SSP011 was issued for **Competact® 15mg/850mg tablets**. Pharmacy teams are required to implement the protocol with immediate effect.

Also, a number of other SSPs, for Fluoxetine and Levothyroxine, have recently been extended. As the content and duration of SSPs can be amended at any time, pharmacists should ensure they are using the latest version before supplying an alternative product.

Contractors are reminded that when using EPS tokens to submit SSP claims, the tokens must be placed in the **red separator** on top of the relevant paid/exempt prescription bundle in a secure manner before submitting to the NHSBSA in the usual manner.

Current versions of SSPs can be found on the **NHSBSA website** and further guidance is available from: **psnc.org.uk/liveSSPs**

Drug Tariff goes online only

From April 2021, pharmacy teams will only be able to access the Drug Tariff **online**.

Pharmacy teams that have a registered email address with the NHSBSA will continue to receive a link to the PDF copy of the Drug Tariff each month. Should any issues arise in receiving this link, pharmacy teams can contact NHSBSA via **nhsbsa.drugtariff@nhs.net**. This can also be used by pharmacy teams to request addition of an email address to the circulation list.

PSNC publishes a number of regular updates which may help pharmacy teams keep track of the status of products in the Drug Tariff. These can all be found in the **Dispensing and Supply section** of our website.

New applications for PEPS suspended

The Pharmacy Earlier Payment Scheme (PEPS) has been suspended for any new contractors wishing to join the scheme until further notice. However, any applications to join the scheme received by the NHSBSA up to and including 17th March 2021 will be processed as usual.

Earlier this month, following news reports regarding finance company Greensill, the Department of Health and Social Care issued the following statement: *'Pharmacy contractors will continue to be paid. We are aware of developments with Greensill Capital and are in discussions to determine the next steps. We will provide an update when these have been finalised.'*

Dispensing Factsheet: Expensive Items

This factsheet prepared by PSNC's Dispensing and Supply team defines what an expensive item is and provides guidance on the endorsement and submission of prescriptions for such items. It also explains how payments for expensive items are calculated by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) and how contractors can reconcile these against their monthly Schedule of Payments (SoP) and/or Prescription Item Reports (Px reports).

What is an expensive item?

An expensive item is any item (drug or appliance) with a net ingredient cost (NIC) of £100 or more i.e. the total cost of the prescription item must be equal to or over £100. The total NIC value is calculated based on the total quantity of each individual item on a prescription form.

If the value of an individual item is under £100 but the total prescribed quantity of that item takes the total item value to £100 or above, that item would be classed as an expensive item. For example, Mesalazine 1g gastro-resistant tablets (Salofalk) has a list price of £58.50 (90 tablets) according to the March 2021 Drug Tariff; if you received a prescription for two packs (180 tablets) the overall NIC for that item would be £117.00 making this item an expensive item.

The most expensive product listed In the March 2021 Drug Tariff is Chenodeoxycholic acid 250mg capsules (Leadiant Biosciences Ltd) which has a basic price of £14,000.00 for 100 capsules.

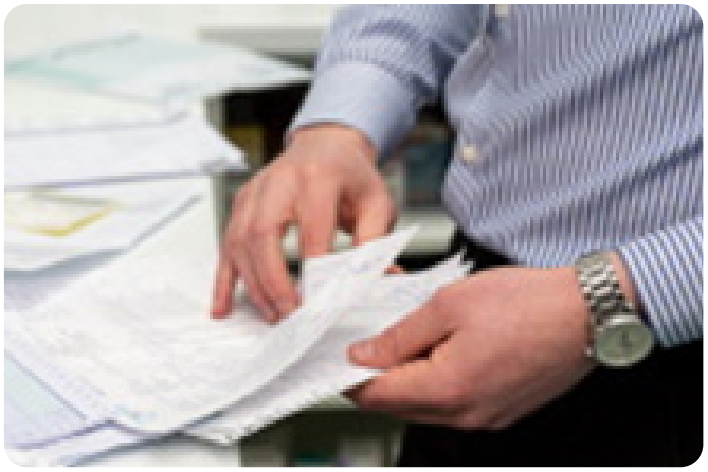
Payments for expensive items

An Expensive Prescription Fee equivalent to 2% of the NIC will be payable on all prescription items equal to or over £100 (see Professional Fees section in Part IIIA of the **Drug Tariff**). Following the current normal prescription payment timetable, the actual final reimbursement for items dispensed is received two months after a prescription is submitted for payment. Due to this payment lag, the expensive item fee may help to mitigate against any increased cashflow risks for contractors dispensing such items.

Payments are made on the 1st of each month, where this falls on a weekend or bank holiday payment will be made on the working day prior.

Dispensing month	Submission month	Advanced Payment	Reconciliation
April	May	June	July
May	June	July	August
June	July	August	September
July	August	September	October

For example, June payment will comprise of the 100% estimated Advance payment for prescriptions submitted in May (dispensed in April) with the full value of the priced prescriptions less the recovery of the estimated 100% Advance payment for prescriptions submitted in April (dispensed in March).



Endorsements

Although no additional prescription endorsements are required to claim the 2% Expensive Prescription Fee, contractors must ensure that usual endorsements are applied to prescriptions, where required. Particular attention must be given to endorsing prescriptions for **multiple flavours**, **Broken Bulk claims** and for **unlicensed specials/imports**, to allow the NHSBSA to determine if the items prescribed should be treated as 'expensive' for payment purposes.

Sorting and submission of prescriptions for expensive items

Paper prescriptions

Paper prescription forms with expensive items should be placed in the appropriate **red separators** when submitting a prescription bundle for payment. Sorting forms into red separators allows operators at the NHSBSA to carry out additional checks on certain types of prescriptions before final payment is confirmed.

EPS prescriptions

There are no virtual red separators for electronic prescriptions. Prescriptions that would ordinarily be placed in a red separator are treated accordingly by the NHSBSA, when submitted electronically.

For electronic prescriptions, contractors should always consider the **five-day EPS window** to ensure that any claims for expensive items are submitted in a timely manner to avoid any delays to payment. If an item is dispensed during a calendar month but its corresponding claim message is submitted later than the 5th of the following month, the item will not be reimbursed according to the month in which it was dispensed leading to a delay in payments by an extra month.

How do I know which items have been treated as expensive items?

You can find the number of expensive items paid and the amount reimbursed in the *Summary of Expensive Items* section of your SoP. This section is broken down into number of items between £100 and £300, and number of items over £300. A breakdown of expensive items (including product description and pack size) dispensed during the month is included under *'Details of items which have a basic price equal to or over £100'*.

SUMMARY OF EXPENSIVE ITEMS

The total number of items reported may not always correspond with the number of "Expensive prescription fees" shown on the schedule of NHSBSA authorised payments. This is due to the fact that any information in this Expensive Item List is reported at drug code level. The basic price values in the table below do not take into account any broken bulk adjustments credited/debited in the total basic prices included under Drug and Appliance Costs above.

DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF ITEMS	TOTAL BASIC PRICE £
Number of items over £ 100 and up to £ 300	64	9,148.60
Number of items over £ 300	5	1,757.12
Total of items over £ 100	**69**	**10,905.72**

DETAILS OF ITEMS WHICH HAVE A BASIC PRICE EQUAL TO OR OVER £ 100

FORM/ ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PACK SIZE	QTY	BASIC PRICE £
A03063/1	NUTRINI LIQUID 500	500.00	60	391.80
A00937/1	PRAMIPEXOLE 3.15MG MODIFIED-RELEASE TABLETS 30	30.00	28	363.88
A02504/1	JEVITY 1.5KCAL LIQUID 500	500.00	64	363.52

You can find the total value of Expensive Prescription Fees (2F) paid under the section titled 'Prescription Fees' on page 1 of your SoP.

PRESCRIPTION FEES

			£
Activity payment		7418 @ 127.00p	9,420.86
Additional fees	2A unlicensed medicines		120.00
	2B appliances - measured and fitted		0.00
	appliances - home delivery		78.70
	2E controlled drug schedules 2 and 3		77.86
	2F expensive prescription fees	69	218.16
	Manually priced		0.00

Contractors can also access their Px reports on the **Information Services Portal** to view all expensive items and applicable fees paid by the NHSBSA for a given dispensing month.

When checking through the details of expensive items listed in the SoP, the following points need to be considered:

- The list of expensive items is shown in descending price order.
- If you have dispensed an item where the combined NIC of everything that made up that item is equal to or more than £100, that combined total will appear on the itemised list.
- The expensive item list includes information on items dispensed from more than one pack size equal to or over £100 including extemporaneously prepared items.
- If you have submitted an expensive item for payment and it does not appear on the itemised list as expected, this does not necessarily mean that there has been an incorrect payment. For example, if Broken Bulk has been claimed on an expensive item, this may not be itemised on the payment schedule as it would only show the total price for the prescribed amount. Items with Broken Bulk claims will only be itemised on the SoP if the price for the prescribed amount exceeds £100.
- Products prescribed as 'assorted flavours', are processed as separate items for each flavour. Therefore, if the total cost of an individual flavour does not exceed £100, the item will NOT be classed as 'expensive' even if the combined total cost of all flavours dispensed exceeds £100.

- On the SoP and Px report, the product description of 'Exception Handler Unspecified Item' or 'Exception Handler Discount Not Deducted Item' indicates that the product prescribed cannot be specified as it is not held by the Dictionary of Medicines and Devices (dm+d).

Impact of expensive items on the Average Item Value (AIV)

It is important to note that fluctuations in the number or value of expensive items dispensed each month can have a significant impact on the average item value (AIV) for a pharmacy in a given month and consequently the level of advance paid the following month.

$$\text{AIV} = \frac{\text{Sub-total of prescription fees plus the total of drug and appliance costs}}{\text{Total number of items for which a fee is paid}}$$

Fluctuations in AIV can have an impact on pharmacy cashflow. A low AIV would result in a reduced Advance Payment which may not help cover the costs of ordering very expensive items prescribed in the current dispensing month. On the other hand, very expensive items dispensed in a single month can increase the pharmacy AIV which in turn can increase the level of Advance Payment a contractor receives.

Reconciliation

PSNC recommends keeping a record/log of all expensive items dispensed each month to assist with reconciliation against SoP/Px report. System suppliers may be able to assist by generating monthly PMR reports of expensive items dispensed.

If you believe you have been incorrectly paid for an expensive item after reviewing your SoP and/or Px reports, you can submit a request to the NHSBSA to conduct a recheck of your entire monthly bundle or a specific prescription item.

For information on the recheck process and guidance on how to identify payment discrepancies see PSNC's **Prescription Rechecks** page.

For enquiries relating to payments for expensive items please contact the NHS Prescription Services Helpdesk on 0300 330 1349 or email **nhsbsa.prescriptionservices@nhsbsa.nhs.uk**

Related Resources

Items With Multiple Flavours
Understanding your FP34 Schedule of Payments
Using your Schedule of Payment to monitor performance
Prescription Rechecks

Ask PSNC

This month, PSNC's Dispensing and Supply Team answer your questions relating to expensive items.

Q. What should I do if I have not received correct payment for an expensive item?

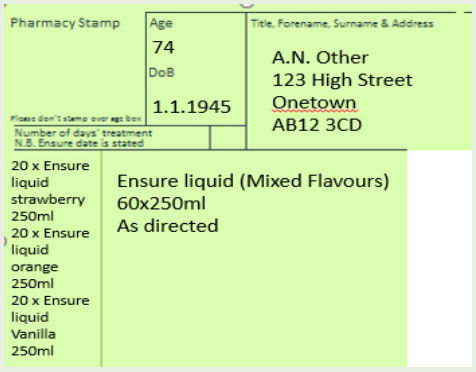
A. After checking through your Schedule of Payments (SoP)and/or Prescription Item (Px) reports you find missing or incorrect payments for any expensive items claimed, you can request the NHSBSA to carry out a recheck of your entire monthly prescription bundle or a specific prescription item. Note that the Basic Price value displayed on the SoP is equivalent to the prescribed quantity for the item reimbursed and does not take into account payment adjustments for Broken Bulk.

Q. If out of pocket expenses incurred when obtaining an item takes the overall value of that item to over £100, will this item be treated as an expensive item by the NHSBSA?

A. No. An expensive item is any item with a net ingredient cost (NIC) of £100 or more and does not include the cost of any additional expenses that may be incurred for dispensing the item for example postage and packaging, handling or any wholesaler surcharges etc. Where applicable, any additional costs incurred when obtaining the item may be claimed as out of pocket expenses.

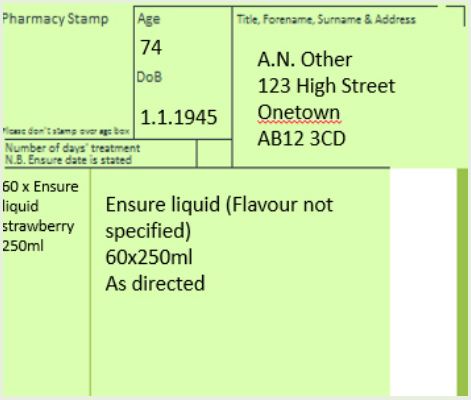
Q. Will I receive an Expensive Prescription Fee for dispensing a prescription ordering assorted flavours of Ensure liquid 60 x 250ml?

A. If three different flavours are supplied and endorsed in equal quantities against a prescription requesting 'Mixed' or 'Assorted flavours' of Ensure liquid 60 x 250ml, the NHSBSA would make three separate payments of £49.00 (£2.45* x 20) along with 3 dispensing fees for each flavour endorsed. As total value of each flavour is under £100, an Expensive Prescription Fee would not be paid. In the example below an expensive item fee would not apply as the total value of each individual flavour dispensed does not exceed £100.



Pharmacy Stamp	Age / DoB	Title, Forename, Surname & Address
	74 DoB 1.1.1945	A.N. Other 123 High Street Onetown AB12 3CD
Please don't stamp over age box Number of days' treatment N.B. Ensure date is stated		
20 x Ensure liquid strawberry 250ml 20 x Ensure liquid orange 250ml 20 x Ensure liquid Vanilla 250ml	Ensure liquid (Mixed Flavours) 60x250ml As directed	

If, however, the prescription ordered a single flavour of Ensure liquid 60 x 250ml, the NHSBSA would reimburse as one item with a value of £147.00 (£2.45* x 60) and this would appear in Expensive Item List on the SoP as its total cost exceeds £100. In the example below an expensive item fee would be paid as the total value of the single flavour dispensed exceeds £100



Pharmacy Stamp	Age / DoB	Title, Forename, Surname & Address
	74 DoB 1.1.1945	A.N. Other 123 High Street Onetown AB12 3CD
Please don't stamp over age box Number of days' treatment N.B. Ensure date is stated		
60 x Ensure liquid strawberry 250ml	Ensure liquid (Flavour not specified) 60x250ml As directed	

*based on the dm+d list price checked on 1 March 2021.

PSNC website
For up to date information and news on community pharmacy issues, visit the PSNC website at psnc.org.uk
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The NHS Prescription Charge from 1st April 2021 is

£9.35

per item

Some items may have more than one charge, e.g. elastic hosiery; a member of the pharmacy team will explain if that is the case.

The NHS prescription charge is a contribution to the NHS; it is not a payment to the pharmacy and it is not related to the cost of your medicine(s).

If you need four or more prescriptions in three months or 12 or more prescriptions a year, you could save money with a Prescription Prepayment Certificate – speak to a member of the pharmacy team for more details.

Certain patient groups are entitled to free NHS prescriptions and some items, e.g. contraceptives, are free-of-charge on the NHS. To check if you're eligible for free NHS prescriptions, ask a member of the pharmacy team for advice or visit: www.nhs.uk/healthcosts

PHARMACY
the Heart of our Community