

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

## Community Pharmacy Somerset COVID Bulletin

**This briefing is critical reading as it contains local information to support you in your business during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

This bulletin focuses on the local Somerset system-based factors, decisions and support available, that will impact on your COVID operational reality.

*I am very frequently asked to pass on heartfelt appreciation for the professional care we are bringing to our communities in Somerset. Thank-you from our colleagues in the Somerset Health and Care system for all that pharmacy is doing.* Michael Lennox, CEO, Somerset LPC.

Please **read, review and reflect** on what you can usefully get from the info and **reconnect with us in the LPC** should you need anything clarified.

Please take a look at our helpful one page **wellbeing advice** for you and your team - attached.

**We are here for you!**

**Dedicated COVID Support** - The LPC has set up **direct helpline on phone and email** with extended support coverage Monday to Friday 8am-8pm, Sat & Sun 9am -4pm:

Email: [covidhelpline.somersetlpc@gmail.com](mailto:covidhelpline.somersetlpc@gmail.com)

Tel: **07496 601495** for urgent advice and support requests.

## People

### 1. Furloughing of staff

The NPA has received confirmation from government that furloughing can be allowed in the following circumstances:

- For those staff in a business not working on NHS service delivery - for example this may include those in community pharmacy whose role is to sell cosmetics.
- In circumstances where NHSE-I agrees to the closure of a pharmacy - for example in a closed shopping mall to which the public have no access and if payments under the contractual framework cease, pharmacy team members, not be needed to support other pharmacies that are open, could be furloughed.
- Please note that DHSC, NHSE-I and PSNC are in discussions about any additional support for extra staff costs and COVID related expenditure in support of community pharmacy.
- GOV.UK advises that where employers who receive public funding for staff costs, and where funding is continuing, that they are to use that money to continue to pay staff in the usual fashion - and correspondingly not furlough them. This also applies to non-public

sector employers who receive public funding for staff costs. In addition to the requirement for the employee's role not to be publicly funded (for which monies will not be reducing), what is clear is that any furlough payments claimed must usually go hand in hand with a downturn in work as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak (subject to our comments below about special categories of workers) and it is assumed many pharmacies will struggle to demonstrate this and, as such, will not be eligible for the job retention scheme.

- In relation to special categories of workers such as those who are shielded and vulnerable, further guidance is being sought. This is due to differences in guidance between the Treasury Direction and that of GOV.UK which can be interpreted in different ways. As soon as further guidance has been received this will be given.

## 2. Staff COVID-19 testing for pharmacy staff – use the Somerset based service first-line

Six pharmacy colleagues were tested last week and thankfully all were COVID free and able to return to work. Please follow the advice on our website to get any affected individuals in your teams tested and to keep your people available for work! [Somerset COVID-19 testing procedures for staff](#)

- At present the logistically easier choice is through the Somerset Health and Care system micro-testing sites set up across four locations in Somerset (Taunton, Shepton Mallet, Yeovil and Bridgwater). Pharmacy staff are included in their frontline worker support.
- There are two South West based national units at Plymouth and Bristol should the local test service not have availability. [Click here](#) for information about eligibility and how to access testing at a **National Test Centre**.

## 3. Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- A local high school are making face visors for GPs, Care Homes and local hospital trusts that we can request. If you require face visors contact [yvonne.somersetlpc@gmail.com](mailto:yvonne.somersetlpc@gmail.com) with the quantity required and Yvonne will try and obtain them for you.
- NHSE advice for preventing facial skin damage beneath personal protective equipment can be accessed [here](#).

# Operations

## 1. May Bank Holiday - Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May:

NHSE-I has confirmed the following arrangements for the upcoming May Bank Holiday on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May:

- All community pharmacies to open for 2.00pm-5.00pm - **with any exceptions agreed in advance with NHSE-I Regional Teams**.
- Planned community pharmacy and urgent dental care bank holiday cover to proceed - **unless otherwise agreed with NHSE-I Regional Teams**.
- Please email confirmation of your opening hours on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May to [england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net) by lunchtime on Wed 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

## 2. EPS tokens

GP surgeries who are not issuing paper tokens have been asked to distribute barcodes either by text, email or offer a patient repeat form.

- Enter the barcode into the spine and it pulls down the prescription.
- It takes a little longer to find prescriptions, but this will hopefully be better than a situation where a patient presents with no information at all!

### 3. Roll-out of Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) Phase 4 to GP practices

This will enable those GP practices to use electronic prescribing even for those patients that do not have EPS nomination. This helps the move towards a greater percentage of EPS dispensing. It will also allow pharmacies to pull down a prescription from the spine without a barcode, using the patient's NHS number and date of birth (usually found on a repeat form).

Visit [PSNC website](#) for further information.

### 4. Extending access to Shielded Patient Flag and SCR for locum pharmacists

- To support community pharmacy teams to work efficiently and flexibly, access to the Summary Care Record (SCR) is being extended. This will also provide access to the [Shielded Patients Flag in SCR Application \(SCRa\)](#).
- The first phase of this work will grant SCR access to all locum pharmacists with the 5F locum code on their smartcards. A new smartcard role, National Locum Pharmacist + SCR - Covid-19, will be added to smartcards and will automatically expire after one year. This will be done centrally with no action required by individuals. This role should be used when working flexibly at sites where you do not have a dedicated smartcard role specific to the site.
- The wording of the alert has been amended to the following: *"This person has been advised to consider shielding. This information may support you to manage this patient but should not be used in isolation as an assessment of risk. Patient management decisions should always be made drawing on the widest range of information sources."*

### 5. Guidance on ethical professional decision making in the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society has produced [a new ethical decision making framework](#) to support pharmacists and pharmacy teams faced with making difficult decisions linked to the exceptional impact of Covid-19. The framework can be used to support colleagues involved in strategic planning, or to help people with their medicines and is for use by pharmacy professionals in all settings.

### 6. Keep your NHS 111 Directory of Services Profile and your NHS website profile up to date

With more people using online services, it is important to keep your NHS website profile up to date. The step-by-step guide for updating your NHS Website profile is available [here](#). For temporary closures of more than 5 days please amend your opening times within the [Dos Profile Updater](#), for temporary closures of less than 5 days please amend your RAG status to 'RED' using the [DoS Capacity status tool](#) which can be accessed from the login page on DoS Profile Updater.

### 7. Daily NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE-I) Bulletin

NHSE-I are publishing a daily COVID-19 Primary Care Bulletin, which includes a specific section for community pharmacy updates. We recommend any contractors not already registered to receive this important update sign up [here](#).

## Customers

### 1. Stop Smoking advice for your customers and patients

**smokefreelife**  
Somerset

#### There is no better time to quit – Smokefreelife Somerset is here to help

- Smokers are being encouraged to quit as they are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19.
- Smoking increases the severity due to the damage caused to lungs, and the physical act of

smoking itself - fingers to face etc - increases the risk, so there is no better time to quit.

- Smokefreelife Somerset is your local stop smoking service, providing FREE support to Somerset residents to become smoke free. Evidence shows that smokers are much more likely to quit if they get expert support.
- We offer a 12 week treatment programme delivered normally through group support at our Quit Clubs. However, during the current COVID-19 pandemic, all support is provided over the telephone by our team of qualified and experienced Quit Coaches. Support is available at various times during the day and some evenings and is provided weekly throughout the treatment programme.

#### **How to refer for support**

- Smokers who are motivated to stop smoking can self-refer for support or be referred by their healthcare professional.
- Self-referral: Call Smokefreelife Somerset on 01823 356222 or book via the [website](#).

## **2. Varenicline (Champix®) PgD online training (7:00-9:30pm)**

This training is for pharmacists who deliver the Varenicline PgD community pharmacy service in Somerset and are due an update or those who are planning to start delivering the service.

- Tue 16 June 2020
- Thu 24 September 2020
- Wed 18 November 2020

Email: [anne.somersetlpc@gmail.com](mailto:anne.somersetlpc@gmail.com) to book your place.

## **3. Advice for parents during coronavirus about an unwell child**

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health have produced a poster advising parents about what to do if a child becomes unwell during the coronavirus pandemic.

A downloadable copy can be found [here](#).

## **4. Managing Conflict: Dealing with Angry and Abusive Patients**

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society in collaboration with The Mental Wellness Academy and Pharmacy Support has produced [guidance](#) for dealing with angry and abusive patients.

## **5. The following NHS.UK pages have been updated to reflect feedback from community pharmacy in light of the coronavirus pandemic:**

- [How to order repeat prescriptions online](#)
- [What to expect from your pharmacy team](#)
- [How to get medical help from home](#)

A public facing PR campaign will be launched in early May.

## **6. Patient facing information for pharmacies**

- Public Health England has produced new digital posters for pharmacies to use on social media and in-pharmacy screens have been produced with the following messages:
  - *Don't enter your local pharmacy if you or anyone you live with has coronavirus symptoms*
  - *There's no need to order extra medicines.*
  - *Pharmacies are making changes to allow them to stay open during the pandemic.*

Copies of the posters can be [downloaded here](#).

- NHS Somerset has produced a series of six images to support pharmacy teams during this time. These can be used to raise public awareness, eg, via social media posts. The LPC will post these to social media over the next few days - please share and retweet these. An example of one of the images is shown below.

Visit the [LPC website](#) to view and download copies of all the images.



#### 7. Helping patients to manage ordering their inhalers and insulins

NHS Somerset has produced guides for patients to help them to manage ordering of their inhalers and insulins, reduce over-ordering and reduce waste. Similar versions have been issued to GP practices.

- **Prevent medicines waste how to manage your inhaler stock at home**
- **Prevent medicines waste how to manage your insulin stock at home**

Visit the [LPC website](#) for copies.

## Finance

### Supply of Specialist Medicines

- All pharmacies (and Head Offices/Area Managers where appropriate) who are commissioned to provide this service received a letter from NHSE-I before Easter advising that the 2018-2020 service was being extended until 31st March 2021 as well as the revised list of drugs they are required to hold.
- All contractors who are not providing the service have received information explaining that the service was continuing until 31st March 2021, a list of the pharmacies providing the service and the list of drugs that participating pharmacies are required to hold.

Visit the [LPC website](#) for copies of the documents.

## LPC contact details and useful resources

### LPC contact details:

- CEO: Michael Lennox. Tel: 07798 861866. Email: [michael.somersetlpc@gmail.com](mailto:michael.somersetlpc@gmail.com)

- Engagement Officer: Yvonne Lamb: Tel: 07932 952497. Email: [yvonne.somersetlpc@gmail.com](mailto:yvonne.somersetlpc@gmail.com)
- Administration Officer: Mary Pennington. Tel: 077142 14811. Email: [somersetlpc@gmail.com](mailto:somersetlpc@gmail.com)

If you wish to contact any other LPC Member, visit our website at: [LPC Members and officers.](#)

**Useful resources:**

- NPA: [www.npa.co.uk/coronavirus-updates/](http://www.npa.co.uk/coronavirus-updates/)
- PSNC: [COVID-19](#)
- [NHS \(COVID-19\) Community Pharmacy Standard Operating Procedure](#) and [Contact details for Community Pharmacy SOP](#)
- [Somerset LPC website](#) - updated on a daily basis.



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