

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 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.

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!**

**We begin this week's bulletin with a message from your LPC chair, Peter Whitaker.**

Dear all,

I hope all our pharmacists and pharmacy teams are well and in good spirits after what has been a very challenging and unprecedented eight weeks. It now seems the right time to reflect...how has it been for us as pharmacy teams and how is it now? More importantly, how are we all feeling both physically and mentally?

We will have all had very different experiences as we have adapted rapidly to social distancing and managing queues, something that varies according to our pharmacy size and layout. Our pharmacies have also had to deal with a big initial surge in workload, different hours, essential and advanced services virtually ceasing along with reduced staff levels as team members have had to isolate or look after family. Throughout all this Community Pharmacy in Somerset has risen to the challenge and continued to deliver great patient care, albeit in a different way. As an LPC we want to say thank-you for what you have done, day in day out. Our pharmacists, managers and dispensary teams have dealt with everything thrown at them in a thoroughly professional way and this has been recognised by colleagues in the wider Somerset NHS network.

We all now recognise this is the 'new normal' and these ways of working are going to be in place for some time. It is therefore important that we step back, reflect and regroup. Many are physically tired after all the extra workload and coping with different ways of working. More significantly some team members are emotionally exhausted due to the anxieties and fears brought on by the current situation both in their personal lives and due to our role on the frontline. Others are frustrated as our ways of working have been turned upside down. Please take some extra time to listen to and support one another within your pharmacy teams and more widely with your pharmacy colleagues across

Somerset. We are launching a Somerset 'community of pharmacy' this week to provide a further channel for support to you and all your team, please see the 'People' section below. We hope you will join in; by supporting each other, we will emerge stronger from this.

Finally, may I once again say thank-you for your selfless and dedicated work. As we move forward we can all be very proud of our achievements over the past eight weeks.

Peter Whitaker, LPC chair.

**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. **COVID-19 testing for pharmacy staff [Please use the Somerset based service first-line]**

- Somerset LPC are concerned that our pharmacy teams are not taking full advantage of the Somerset Health system offer to test pharmacy healthcare personnel rapidly and locally.
- Please ensure that your teams, including those who are currently socially isolating due to suspected symptoms of COVID-19, are fully briefed about this great support negotiated by your LPC. This is a key part of your duty of care for your teams; please follow the advice on our website to get any affected individuals in your teams tested and to keep them 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**.
- For further details see the attached NHS leaflet ***How do NHS employees get a test for COVID-19?***
- Please notify the SW NHSE-I Primary Care Team if you have any issues with service delivery during this time - email: [england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net)

### 2. **'Somerset Community of Pharmacy' - launch**

Cornwall LPC have shared that they are supporting their contractors during this time via weekly virtual drop-in sessions. These have provided helpful support for those working at the frontline and an opportunity to share experiences and ideas.

We propose to try this as a pilot for one month in Somerset to see if it proves useful to you. So we are launching the **'Somerset Community of Pharmacy'**.

#### **Why:**

- To grow a sense of local resilience, wellbeing, move to normalisation and demonstrate our commitment to you.
- To gather insight and share within our community of pharmacy to support you.

#### **What:**

- Weekly scheduled Zoom drop in meeting with a theme for each week, but an open agenda.

- Low formality, safe space, wellbeing check-in.
- An opportunity for the LPC to feedback to you about ongoing work and information we feel would be useful
- Q & A session - bring a question or problem and help to answer or solve them - nothing too heavy; we can signpost you for further support of required.

#### When:

- Mondays 1:00-2:00pm, starting 18 May 2020.
- Please dip in and out as convenient to you; you don't need to commit to a whole hour!
- Bring your whole team or some of your team.

#### How

- Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84809183476>
- Password: 921788 (Same login details each week)

#### Theme

- The theme for the first meeting will be, "**how are you feeling eight weeks in?**"

**We look forward to meeting with you on Monday 18th May between 1-2pm. Please do make use of this opportunity to help us to help you!**

## Operations

### 1. 25th May 2020 - Bank Holiday Opening

During last week's COVID-19 Community Pharmacy Webinar, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) stated that they are hoping to revert to standard locally determined opening arrangements for the Spring Bank Holiday on 25th May 2020.

However, it was suggested that NHSE&I would need sufficient data about those community pharmacies that are already planning to open to be able to determine whether there will be sufficient provision on that day. Contractors are therefore strongly encouraged to tell their local NHSE&I team if their premises will be open on the 25th May bank holiday.

### 2. Changes to period of treatment on prescriptions - please report to LPC

It has come to our attention that whilst adopting electronic repeat dispensing (ERD), some practices might be converting 28 day prescriptions to a longer duration.

- Changing this is against the national policy for protecting the supply chain and against good ERD set-up practice.
- Please report any obvious bulk switches to longer periods of treatment to the LPC via Yvonne Lamb [Yvonne@somersetlpc@gmail.com](mailto:Yvonne@somersetlpc@gmail.com) even if not on the back of ERD. The LPC will work with the relevant stakeholders to reverse this situation.

### 3. Electronic prescription service Phase 4 (EPS 4)

The LPC have been made aware that some GP practices in Somerset have enabled the EPS 4 functionality on their EMIS system. This was much sooner than we anticipated and there are a couple of things you will need to do for an EPS 4 prescription.

- EPS 4 enables an electronic prescription to go to a pharmacy where the patient has not previously been nominated to.
- The prescription will be sent VIA EPS.
- The patient may present at the pharmacy with a barcode either on a mobile/email or paper ( although paper is strongly discouraged at moment due to COVID)
- If patient forgets their device/barcode you can search the prescription on the EPS tracker

using the following patients details

- Patients Name, DOB, NHS Number all found on patients re-order form or you can use the barcode if provided by Patient.
- Once you have located the prescription and download and dispense and claim as normal process, though this may be the ideal opportunity to ask those un-nominated patients if they wish to be “nominated” to your Pharmacy.

The [NHS Digital EPS webpage](#) has been updated with information regarding EPS 4 along with information for CCGs , information for GP practices and information for dispensers.

#### 4. Varenicline (Champix®) PgD online training (7:00-9:30pm) [Book now]

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.

## Customers

#### 1. Domestic abuse UK SAYS NO MORE campaign #YOUARENOTALONE [Please participate]

- Unfortunately the incidence of domestic abuse has increased during the coronavirus lockdown. Pharmacies are being asked to consider taking part in ‘safe space’ schemes as part of the [UK SAYS NO MORE](#) campaign run by Hestia, a national charity and the UK’s pharmacy bodies. The initiative aims to create a community around those affected by domestic abuse and reassures victims that support remains available during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Somerset County Council and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group have asked [pharmacies to display posters and where appropriate make their consultation room available as a safe space](#) where victims of domestic abuse can be put in contact with local specialist support services as quickly as possible.
  - Please direct people who are experiencing domestic abuse to Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (SIDAS), rather than national helplines, wherever possible. This is because the local service is able to respond more quickly.
  - SIDAS accepts self referrals or third party referrals from professionals.
    - Somerset’s local domestic abuse helpline is 0800 69 49 999.
    - Information about this service, other related services, how to make a referral and support for the public and professionals can all be found [here](#).
    - Digital copies of SIDAS posters and leaflets can be found [here](#).
- Please inform your staff about this initiative.
- Please promote the national Safe Space message by displaying the poster available [here](#) on your pharmacy premises (a copy of the poster is shown below).
- Other UK SAYS NO MORE Safe Spaces resources including posters, cards and window stickers can be found [here](#).
  - The [NPA has issued guidance](#) on identifying domestic abuse and safeguarding, which you can share with your pharmacy teams.

#### 2. Mental health awareness week (18-24 May 2020)

- Next week is [Mental Health Awareness Week](#) - the theme this year is kindness in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Mark Rowland, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation

has said: “Now more than ever, we need to re-discover kindness in our daily lives. We want to use Mental Health Awareness Week to celebrate the thousands of acts of kindness that are so important to our mental health. And we want to start a discussion on the kind of society we want to shape as we emerge from this pandemic.”

- In this week’s wellbeing attachment we consider ‘giving’ because people who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

## Finance

### 1. Business rates relief due to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors in England [will not have to pay business rates for the 2020 to 2021 tax year](#) due to the coronavirus pandemic.

#### Eligibility

You are eligible if your property is a:

- shop
- restaurant, café, bar or pub
- cinema or live music venue
- assembly or leisure property - for example, a sports club, a gym or a spa
- hospitality property - for example, a hotel, a guest house or self-catering accommodation

#### How to apply

- You do not need to take any action. Your local council will apply the discount automatically.
- You can estimate the business rate relief using the [business rates calculator](#).
- [Contact your local council](#) if you’re not getting a relief you think you’re entitled to.

#### When it applies

The relief will apply to your business rates bills for the 2020 to 2021 tax year. Your local council may have to reissue your bill, but will do this as soon as possible.

## 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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