October 2017

**Template Press Release for #pharmacywinter activities**

LPCs may like to consider issuing the below press release on or just before the November action day. If it has not already been used, the [template press release on the flu vaccination service](http://psnc.org.uk/services-commissioning/psnc-briefings-services-and-commissioning/psnc-briefing-06217-flu-vaccination-service-press-release-template-august-2017/) could also be considered.

[insert date]

[insert location] PHARMACIES ARE READY FOR WINTER

Community pharmacies in [insert location] are taking part in a national action day to highlight the important role that they play in helping local communities to stay healthy through winter.

Through the #pharmacywinter campaign, pharmacy teams will be sharing stories about all they are doing to help local communities to stay healthy in the winter months. You can join in by tweeting your experiences with [insert location] pharmacies all day on Tuesday November 21st 2017, using the hashtag #pharmacywinter.

This winter, local community pharmacies are helping to get residents vaccinated against flu as well as offering advice and support when people have coughs, colds or other symptoms. This is particularly important as we gear up for a winter that is expected to be difficult, with GP practices and hospitals braced for huge pressure.

[insert pharmacist name] told us today about how community pharmacies are aiming for a record year for flu vaccinations, with [insert local figure] jabs given by pharmacies in the area [already/last year].

In particular, [insert pharmacist name] told us how [his/her] pharmacy is [insert relevant text e.g. preparing for the winter months/ trying to support local GP practices/ providing record numbers of flu vaccinations/ other]. They also explained the impact that pharmacy services can have on the NHS, helping to reduce pressure on local GPs and hospitals.

[Insert pharmacist name] comments: “This winter community pharmacies are going to be needed more than ever. We are the first port of call for many local people on healthcare matters and our regular patients and the wider community really rely on us. This is particularly the case over the winter months with coughs, colds and flu all becoming more common, and GP practices and hospitals already working flat out.

As well as making sure everyone has the medicines they need this winter we’ll be helping people to understand and make the most of those medicines, and offering them advice on common ailments. We can also vaccinate people against flu, if they are eligible for a free NHS flu jab. And all of this without the need to wait for an appointment.”

[Insert LPC representative name] said: “As many patients in [insert location] will know, our local community pharmacies are doing far more than just dispensing medicines this winter. They are offering a whole range of services and can be particularly helpful as we move into the winter season and GPs and hospitals become busier.

We’re really proud of how our local pharmacies have been doing with the NHS flu vaccination service, helping to make sure that everyone who needs the vaccine, gets it. But we believe the Government should be making even better use of pharmacies; we would love to offer even more services to help local people to stay healthy, and reduce pressure on other local healthcare services.”

**About community pharmacy**

Your local pharmacy is more than just a place to get medicines. It provides a range of NHS services and ensures people can get face-to-face, healthcare professional advice without an appointment.

There are around 14,000 community pharmacies across the UK, so for most of us, there’s one very close by. In fact, 96% of people can get to a pharmacy within 20 minutes by walking or using public transport. Community pharmacists provide rapid access, without appointment, to a healthcare professional and offer a range of clinical and public health services. Most pharmacies now have consultation rooms, where you can talk with your pharmacist without being overheard.

You might be surprised at what pharmacies now offer: personalised medicines advice, help to quit smoking and to maintain good sexual health, treatment for common ailments, advice on preventing disease. And more.  It’s a package of care…not just packets of pills!

What’s more, pharmacies are part of the fabric of local communities. They provide local employment and are a health and social care asset close to where people live, work and shop.

-ends-

[insert contact email and telephone number]

**Organising local councillor visits to pharmacies**

The action day presents an opportunity to invite local councillors, to visit a community pharmacy. In cases where MPs are unable to attend the Parliamentary reception, an MP visit to a pharmacy may also be an option.

**Please note:** We are working on new guidance on hosting pharmacy visits for MPs in light of the current situation and challenges for community pharmacies, but previous guidance, which still contains relevant points on selecting a pharmacy and the need to engage with different politicians, is available in this briefing:

[PSNC Briefing 048/17: Hosting a pharmacy visit for your local MP (July 2017)](http://psnc.org.uk/psncs-work/psnc-briefings-psncs-work/psnc-briefing-04817-hosting-a-pharmacy-visit-for-your-local-mp-july-2017/)

If LPCs would like to arrange a visit for a local councillor focusing on the winter action day, the key messages set out above should provide a good basis for the discussions at the visit. You may then like to focus on a particular service the pharmacy is providing, such as the NHS Community Pharmacy Flu Vaccination Service. We have set out below some template documentation for such visits.

**Template email invitation for #pharmacywinter visits**

Dear [local councillor]

[LPC] represents community pharmacies in your [constituency/area] and we would like to invite you to visit one of them as part of a national pharmacy campaigning day in November. The visit will allow you to see first-hand all the work local pharmacy teams do for the local communities you represent, as well as to better understand the challenges they face.

As we head into the winter months there are growing concerns about how the NHS will manage the likely increases in demand for services. We are keen to show you the services that community pharmacies can already offer to help with this, and to talk to you about what more we would like to do to help local people in [insert location].

We had in mind [xx pharmacy] at [address]. The pharmacy is providing a range of services which are highly valued by those who use it, and we would like in particular to discuss their success in offering NHS flu vaccinations.

[Possible sentence for councillors with whom there is an existing relationship: We have very much appreciated your support for community pharmacy in the past, and we think this would be a valuable opportunity to update you on the latest developments and how pharmacies in [area] are managing.]

We would be very happy to take photographs and promote the visit on social media, as part of a national #pharmacywinter action day, and we would also like to invite the local press to showcase your support for community pharmacies.

Please contact me on the details below so we can begin organising a pharmacy visit or, if you cannot spare the time, we would be happy to brief you on local pharmacy issues. I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

[LPC]

**Template press release for #pharmacywinter visits**

[insert date]

LOCAL [MP/COUNCILLOR] [insert name] LEARNS HOW

PHARMACIES ARE HELPING RESIDENTS THIS WINTER

[Add photograph if possible. Provide caption with names of those included]

[Insert MP/councillor name] has visited [insert pharmacy name] to hear about the work the team are doing to help residents in [location] this winter. [Insert name] heard how local pharmacies are helping to get residents vaccinated against flu, and about the advice and support they can give people when they have coughs, colds or other symptoms.

During the visit [insert name] [insert activity as it took place e.g. discussed various services with the pharmacy team/ spoke to patients/ received a flu vaccination.] They also heard about how community pharmacies are aiming for a record year for flu vaccinations, with [insert local figure] jabs given by pharmacies in the area [already/last year].

In particular, pharmacist [insert name] was keen to tell them about how the pharmacy is [insert local text e.g. preparing for the winter months/ trying to support local GP practices/ providing record numbers of flu vaccinations/ other]. They also discussed the impact that pharmacy services can have on the NHS, helping to reduce pressure on local GPs and hospitals.

[Insert pharmacist name] comments: “This winter community pharmacies are going to be needed more than ever. We are the first port of call for many local people on healthcare matters and our regular patients and the wider community really rely on us. This is particularly the case over the winter months with coughs, colds and flu all becoming more common, and GP practices and hospitals already working flat out.

As well as making sure everyone has the medicines they need this winter we’ll be helping people to understand and make the most of those medicines, and offering them advice on common ailments. We can also vaccinate people against flu, if they are eligible for a free NHS flu jab. And all of this without the need to wait for an appointment.”

[Insert LPC representative name] said: “As many patients in [insert location] will know, our local community pharmacies are doing far more than just dispensing medicines this winter. They are offering a whole range of services and can be particularly helpful as we move into the winter season and GPs and hospitals become busier.

We’re really proud of how our local pharmacies have been doing with the NHS flu vaccination service, helping to make sure that everyone who needs the vaccine, gets it. But we believe the Government should be making even better use of pharmacies; we would love to offer even more services to help local people to stay healthy, and reduce pressure on other local healthcare services.”

[request quote from local Councillor – **do not use a quote unless permission granted**. Some will prefer a draft quote for them to sign off. If so suggested wording follows.]

*[Local councillor] commented: “As we approach the winter months, all NHS services are working harder than ever to manage the increasing demand for healthcare. I have learnt today about how community pharmacies are playing their part in these efforts, helping people when they are feeling unwell or need healthcare advice. I also heard about all the incredible work they are doing to provide flu vaccinations that can help people avoid getting ill in the first place. I am keen to ensure the council does all that it can to develop community pharmacy services that meet the needs of both local patients and health and care services.”*

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-ends-

[insert contact email and telephone number]