

Contract Factsheet: Pharmacy opening hours in 2016

Are you aware of pharmacy opening hour requirements in the terms of service? Here we explain all you need to know for the public holidays in 2016.

PSNC's Regulations and Support Team are often asked questions about the requirements in the terms of service relating to opening hours. We have therefore produced this quick reference guide for 2016.

Name of holiday	Date in 2016	Day of the week	Covered by the Regulations?	Can the pharmacy close without giving notice?
Good Friday	25th March 2016	Friday	✓	✓
Easter Sunday	27th March 2016	Sunday	✓	✓
Easter Monday*	28th March 2016	Monday	✓	✓
Early May Bank Holiday*	2nd May 2016	Monday	✓	✓
Spring Bank Holiday*	30th May 2016	Monday	✓	✓
Summer Bank Holiday*	29th August 2016	Monday	✓	✓
Christmas Day	25th December 2016	Sunday	✓	✓
Christmas Day (substitute day)*	27th December 2016 (substitute day declared bank holiday as Christmas Day falls on a Sunday this year)	Tuesday	✓	✓
Boxing Day*	26th December 2016	Monday	✓	✓
New Years' Day 2017	1st January 2017	Sunday	X	X
New Years' Day 2017 (substitute day)*	2nd January 2017	Monday	✓	✓

*These dates are not specifically mentioned by name but because they are official "bank holidays" they will be covered by the Regulations

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I close my pharmacy on these days?

Yes. Community pharmacy contractors can close their pharmacies on days which are specifically mentioned in the Regulations (namely Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday) or a day which has been designated as a "bank holiday" unless directed to open by NHS England.

2. What about my core contractual hours?

A pharmacy will be treated as having been open for its usual hours on that day for the purpose of counting the core contractual hours that week. Therefore the contractor can close their pharmacy on the days indicated without giving notice or making an application to change their core hours.

3. Are there exceptional circumstances when I must open on these days?

Yes. If a contractor has been directed to open their pharmacy by NHS England.

4. Can I close my pharmacy early any other time?

Sometimes contractors may wish to close an hour or so earlier than usual on a particular day for any reason. If the hours that the contractor wishes to close early are supplementary hours, then notice of that intention should be given at least three months in advance. If the hours are core hours, then an application is needed, and the contractor would have to be able to satisfy NHS England that there have been changes to the needs of people in the area, otherwise the application would likely to be refused.

Unless you have notified NHS England of changes to your supplementary hours at least three months before the date or applied successfully for amendment of core hours, the contractor will not be able to close early.

5. Do I need to notify NHS England of opening intentions on bank holidays?

Contractors are encouraged to inform NHS

England whether their premises will be open on bank holidays.

This information is of critical importance to NHS England in order that it is able to plan pharmacy provision during holiday periods. If NHS England is not able to determine the opening hours of pharmacies with a high degree of certainty, its only option may be to issue directions to one or more pharmacies requiring them to open.

This clearly is not in the best interests of pharmacies if there are other suitable pharmacies that would have been open; so PSNC recommends that all contractors notify their intentions and then open as they have notified.

NHS England has published template forms which can be used for notification of opening intentions; these are available at: tinyurl.com/zwtgvr

For more information, including a comprehensive list of FAQs, please visit: psnc.org.uk/hours