**Key News and Guidance for LPCs: COVID-19**

*Week ending 20th March*

**COVID-19**

**COVID-19 update: PQS, pharmacy services and payments**

This PSNC update sets out a number of new measures (including the postponement of the Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS)) that have been agreed to support community pharmacies as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the new services that are under discussion and the support that PSNC is asking the Government for. This is available at: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-update-pqs-pharmacy-services-and-payments/>

**Letter from the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer**

This is the second of a series of regular updates from Keith Ridge, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, to community pharmacy regarding the emerging COVID-19 situation. This is available here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/preparedness-letter_primary-care_community-pharmacy-19-march-2020.pdf>

**Pharmacy staff included in Government’s list of key workers**

The Government has announced that schools in England will be closed from the end of today (Friday 20th March) for all but a limited number of children. Schools have been asked to continue to provide care for children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot safely be cared for at home. Key workers include all staff working in community pharmacies, pharmacy contractors’ head office staff, delivery drivers, volunteers, as well as those involved in the manufacturing, assembly and delivery of medicines for supply by community pharmacies, such as staff working for pharmaceutical wholesalers. To read more, and for a template letter to issue to pharmacy staff, see here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/pharmacy-staff-included-in-government-list-of-key-workers/>

**Further support materials for contractors added to COVID-19 hub page**

PSNC has updated its hub for community pharmacy teams on the COVID-19 coronavirus to include new business continuity guidance and details of measures to support contractors. Advice and information on shared care clients, nursing and care home patients, and providing Multi-compartment Compliance Aids (MCAs) has today been added to the [business continuity section](https://psnc.org.uk/the-healthcare-landscape/covid19/business-continuity/) of the hub. For further information, please read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/further-support-materials-for-contractors-added-to-covid-19-hub-page/>

**Medicine suppliers request prompt return of tote delivery boxes**

The Healthcare Distribution Association (HDA) is asking that community pharmacy teams support the increase in demand on the supply chain by ensuring delivery tote boxes are returned to suppliers of medicinal products as quickly as possible. Please read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/medicine-suppliers-request-prompt-return-of-tote-delivery-boxes/>

**Crucial medicines added to the list that cannot be parallel exported from the UK**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has announced that over 80 medicines are to be added to the list of medicines which must not be parallel exported from the UK. help ensure there is an uninterrupted supply of medicines for NHS hospitals treating COVID-19 patients. The new restrictions cover crucial medicines such as: adrenaline, insulin, paracetamol and morphine. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/crucial-medicines-added-to-the-list-of-medicines-that-cannot-be-parallel-exported-from-the-uk/>

**Other key news**

**Download the 2020 Prescription Charge Card**

Following the announcement of a prescription charge increase to £9.15 per item earlier this month, PSNC has designed a downloadable Prescription Charge Card for community pharmacies. The card, which has been designed to be easy to download and print ready for display in community pharmacies, is now available on the PSNC website: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/download-the-2020-prescription-charge-card/>

**Appendix**

**Remember: Key actions to take during the pandemic**

Contractors and pharmacy teams can take the following actions to ensure they are well prepared:

1. Read the [**NHSE&I guidance**](https://psnc.org.uk/the-healthcare-landscape/covid19/contractor-guidance-and-support/) **and implement its recommended actions;**
2. Clearly display the [**COVID-19 poster**](https://psnc.org.uk/the-healthcare-landscape/covid19/information-for-the-public/) **at points of entry to your pharmacy;**
3. Read your [**business continuity plan**](https://psnc.org.uk/contract-it/essential-service-clinical-governance/emergency-planning/) **and consider whether it needs to be updated to reflect the current and emerging situation;**
4. Keep up to date with developments by regularly checking the information on [**COVID-19 on GOV.UK**](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus)**, the** [**NHSE&I Coronavirus Primary Care webpage**](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/primary-care/) **and checking your NHSmail shared mailbox on a regular basis for updates from NHSE&I; and**
5. Where possible, display the [**public health advice posters**](https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101/resources/5016) **on hand washing etc.**

#### **Guidance for healthcare professionals**

The key guidance for health professionals is available on the Public Health England (PHE) section of the GOV.UK website:

[**COVID-19: guidance for health professionals (GOV.UK)**](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus)

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) published guidance for primary care teams on 27th February 2020. This includes a specific document for community pharmacy teams, which takes the guidance already available on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus), but contextualises it for the community pharmacy environment:

[**NHSE&I Coronavirus Primary Care webpage**](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/primary-care/)

The guidance explains how to deal with patients presenting in the pharmacy with suspected COVID-19 infection and preparations pharmacy contractors can take to deal with such a scenario. All pharmacy contractors should read the guidance and then undertake appropriate preparations for dealing with potentially infected patients.

**Please visit PSNC’s COVID-19 hub for further information:** [**psnc.org.uk/coronavirus**](https://psnc.org.uk/the-healthcare-landscape/covid19/)