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

*Week ending 29th March*

**COVID-19**

**COVID-19 update: NHS testing and complaints**

This weekend (29th March) the Government announced an expanded coronavirus testing service for NHS staff. PSNC has confirmed with HM Government that the new testing programme will be available to community pharmacy. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-update-nhs-testing-and-complaints/>

**COVID-19: PSNC negotiations update**

PSNC published a list of the possible action points that we are in urgent negotiations with the NHS and Government about to ensure that community pharmacy teams are fully supported in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These include discussions on an urgent funding rescue package, recognising the enormous financial pressures on contractors at this time and the need to ensure that the pharmacy network can continue to stay open and serving patients. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-psnc-negotiations-update/>

**Pharmacy bodies publish resilience guidance to support pharmacy teams**

PSNC (with the NPA, CCA and AIM) published guidance to help support and maintain the community pharmacy network during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance addresses three aspects of an NHS pharmacy’s terms of service – opening hours, responsible pharmacist and unplanned (emergency) closures – with advice given on how best to address each going forwards. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/pharmacy-bodies-publish-resilience-guidance-to-support-pharmacy-teams/>

# **Updated COVID-19 SOP and Opening Hours Flexibility**

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) issued an updated Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for community pharmacies in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically in relation to flexibility in opening hours. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/updated-covid-19-sop-and-opening-hours-flexibility-statement-from-psnc-cca-npa-and-aim/>

**NHS call for Volunteer Army to help with the COVID-19 pandemic**  
The NHS launched a major campaign to sign up 250,000 volunteers to help up to 1.5 million people who have been asked to shield themselves from coronavirus because of underlying health conditions. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/nhs-call-for-volunteer-army-to-help-with-pandemic/>

**COVID-19: dispensing paper prescriptions**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have received several reports of pharmacy contractors refusing to dispense legally valid paper prescriptions. Contractors are reminded that they must dispense legally valid paper prescriptions presented for dispensing, including those from healthcare providers who do not have access to EPS, such as dental practices and hospitals. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-dispensing-paper-prescriptions/>

**COVID-19 support: Free access to wellbeing apps for NHS staff**

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have issued information on the first in a series of psychological support for all NHS staff, including those working in primary care, during the COVID-19 outbreak. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-support-free-access-to-wellbeing-apps/>

**COVID-19 continuity: EPS timely submission tips**

This news story contains tips for timely EPS submission. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/eps-continuity-top-tips-timely-submission-in-case-of-future-temporary-closure/>

**End-of-month submission reminder**

Contractors should submit their end of month bundle and FP34C using their usual delivery method**no later than the 5th day of the month** following that in which supply was made. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/end-of-month-submission-reminder/>

**PSNC CEO addresses the sector**

PSNC Chief Executive Simon Dukes recorded a video message for community pharmacy teams to explain the work that he and the team are doing on behalf of the sector. Watch Simon’s video here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/psnc-ceo-addresses-the-sector/>

**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.