[BEGINS]

**COVID-19: ACCESSING MEDICINES FROM YOUR LOCAL PHARMACIES**

As the UK responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, community pharmacies in [xxx] are working tirelessly to ensure that everyone gets the medicines they need, when they need them.

The government and the NHS have asked around 1.5million people who are at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19 infection to stay at home for a period of 12 weeks. These people will soon receive a letter from the NHS confirming this.

Given the new government advice, it is important that these vulnerable patients are still able to access their prescription medicines. If you are considered a vulnerable patient, and have been asked to stay at home for the next 12 weeks, but need to collect your prescription medicines, the [xxx] Local Pharmaceutical Committee and Government advise you to do the following:

· In the first instance, vulnerable patients are asked to have their medicines collected by a family member, friend or neighbour.

· If no-one is able to help you collect your prescription, vulnerable patients will be able to ask for support from a national volunteer network which is being mobilised in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteers in this network will be ID-checked, and if you need someone to collect your prescription medicines, they may be able to help.

In cases where the above help is not sufficient for patients, a Medicines Delivery Service has been commissioned in community pharmacies to ensure that patients - for whom the above two options are not applicable - are able to receive their prescription medicines when they need them.

All patients are asked to keep in mind that this delivery service is being launched only for the most vulnerable patients – if you or family are able to continue collecting medicines from pharmacies, please do so. This will help to protect pharmacies from an unmanageable increase in workload at this critical time.

Please also remember that the guidance for anyone planning to approach a local pharmacy remains the same:

· Avoid pharmacies if you are showing symptoms of COVID-19: If you have a dry, persistent cough, fever or shortness of breath, please avoid entering your local pharmacies as you would any other healthcare setting.

· Be patient: All pharmacies are under immense pressure and working around the clock to ensure that you get what you need.

· Order medicines as normal: There is no need to stockpile medicines. Ordering extra prescriptions and buying more over the counter medicines than you need will contribute to disruption to the medicines supply chain, which is otherwise robust.

Chair of the local LPC/Local pharmacist said:

“At this time, it is vitally important that those who need their prescriptions from local pharmacies can still access their medicines when they need them. We are today asking those who have been advised to remain indoors to consider how they will be able to access their medicines. The first step is to ask a

family member, friend or neighbour to collect your prescription for you, and if that is not possible, please contact your local pharmacy to see what other options are available to you. For everyone not in those vulnerable groups, please continue to collect your medicines in the normal way.”

[ENDS]

**Contact**

[xxx] Local Pharmaceutical Committee represents community pharmacy contractors (owners) in [xxx]. For further information on this press release please contact: [xxx]

[Contact details including phone and email]