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

 *Week ending 12th April*

**General**

**National pharmacy bodies show their support for pharmacy teams**

The chief executives of the national pharmacy bodies came together to film a video thanking the sector for its work to support patients. The CEOs of PSNC, AIM, CCA, NPA and RPS said their teams would continue to fight pharmacy’s corner and work flat out to provide support and guidance. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/national-bodies-show-their-support-for-pharmacy-teams/>

**PSNC to hold COVID-19 webinars for contractors and LPCs**

PSNC Chief Executive Simon Dukes will be hosting two COVID-19 webinars on Wednesday 15th April: one for community pharmacy contractors and one for LPC Chief Officers. Both 90-minute webinars will give attendees the opportunity to have their questions answered but will also be made available on-demand for anyone who cannot attend live. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/psnc-to-hold-covid-19-webinars-for-contractors-and-lpcs/>

**Social media resources to help promote positive pharmacy work**

For contractors and LPCs looking to promote the positive work their local pharmacies are doing, PSNC has collated some graphics and resources for you to use on your online channels. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/social-media-resources-to-help-promote-positive-pharmacy-work/>

**Pandemic Delivery Service**

**Service Launch: the Community Pharmacy Pandemic Delivery Service**

The Pandemic Delivery Service was agreed. Further details on how community pharmacies are now expected to ensure that very vulnerable patients can continue to receive their medicines safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, including changes to the pharmacy Terms of Service and a new Advanced service, were published by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) on the evening of 10th April. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/service-launch-the-community-pharmacy-pandemic-delivery-service/>

**Update on COVID-19 Pandemic Medicines Delivery Service**

Prior to the Pandemic Delivery Service launch, it was announced that the NHS Volunteer Responders were available to help the NHS in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including to help deliver medicines to shielded patients. At the time, PSNC expressed concern that patient and medicines safety must protected, and said it had asked that pharmacies should only be required to use DBS-checked volunteers to deliver medicines. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/update-on-covid-19-pandemic-medicines-delivery-service/>

**Easter Opening**

**Funding for Easter opening hours**

Further to NHS England and NHS Improvement’s (NHSE&I) decision that community pharmacies in England must open between 2pm and 5pm on the Easter Bank Holidays, PSNC and NHSE&I agreed that contractors will be funded for these openings at a rate of £250 per hour. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/funding-for-easter-opening-hours/>

**Clarification on flexibility: Easter opening hours update**

NHSE&I clarified the ability of its Regional teams to operate some local flexibility in regards to the Easter opening of community pharmacies. In particular, pharmacies were told they could apply for an exemption to the requirement to open where there is minimal demand due to Government’s social distancing policy. Read more: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-easter-opening-update-clarification-on-local-flexibility/>

**COVID-19 Easter opening hours within the Directory of Services (DoS)**

PSNC published a news story after receiving queries from pharmacy teams about the process should Easter holiday opening hours need to be updated in the DoS. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/easter-opening-hours-within-the-directory-of-services-dos/>

**NHS IT**

**COVID-19 update: Shielded Patient Flag added to SCR**

NHS Digital have added a ‘Shielded Patient Flag’ (also known as a Vulnerability flag) to the NHS Summary Care Record (SCR) of patients who are on the [shielded patient list](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19). This enables community pharmacy teams using NHS Digital’s SCRa portal to see an alert when viewing the SCR of such a patient. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-update-vulnerability-flag-added-to-scr/>

**COVID-19 update: Nominated pharmacy feature added to the NHS App**

The NHS App now has a new feature that allows patients to view and change their EPS pharmacy nomination. Being able to update nominations in the NHS App means patients can more easily choose the pharmacy that is right for them during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-update-nominated-pharmacy-feature-added-to-the-nhs-app/>

**Other key news**

**Supply notification – Acetazolamide SR 250mg capsules**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has issued a medicine supply notification for Acetazolamide SR 250mg capsules. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/supply-notification-acetazolamide-sr-250mg-capsules/>

**Supply notification – Phytomenadione (Konakion MM Paediatric) 2mg/0.2ml ampoules (Cheplapharm)**

DHSC has issued a medicine supply notification for Phytomenadione (Konakion MM Paediatric) 2mg/0.2ml ampoules. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/supply-notification-phytomenadione-konakion-mm-paediatric-2mg-0-2ml-ampoules-cheplapharm/>

**Pharmacy news in the national media**

PSNC Chief Executive Simon Dukes appeared on [BBC Radio 4's Today programme](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/update-on-covid-19-pandemic-medicines-delivery-service/psnc-on-today-programme-07-04-2020/) to discuss the national medicines delivery service for shielded patients, raising concerns that current plans could leave vulnerable people at risk from fraudsters and potentially without their medicines.

Boots has revealed plans to temporarily close 60 stores that have seen a loss in footfall due to COVID-19 - particularly those in airports, train stations and city centres. Pharmacists will be redeployed to busier nearby stores. Featured in [The Sun](https://www.thesun.co.uk/money/11357185/boots-close-branches-redeploy-pharmacists/) and [The Express](https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/1266826/boots-closures-list-stores-closing-uk-pharmacy-chemist-coronavirus-news).

[ITV News](https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2020-04-08/community-running-group-in-bristol-keeping-fit-by-delivering-medicine-to-people-self-isolating/) reports that a community running group in Bristol is helping local pharmacies deliver medicines to vulnerable patients who cannot leave their homes.

Toby Anderson, chief executive of the Lloyds Pharmacy chain, told BBC Breakfast that 2,500 members of staff are now self-isolating, equivalent to 20% of its entire workforce. Featured in [The Mirror](https://www.mirror.co.uk/money/coronavirus-2500-frontline-pharmacy-workers-21838058).

[ITV News](https://www.itv.com/news/2020-04-09/pharmacies-abandoned-on-the-front-line-in-covid-19-effort-itv-news-survey-reveals/) reports that pharmacists feel 'abandoned on the front line'. The news outlet published a survey - conducted by the PDA - of around 1,000 pharmacy workers and found that 89% of pharmacy workers have experienced abuse or aggression in the past month.

[BBC News](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52173472) reports that high street pharmacists are needlessly being put at risk of catching and spreading coronavirus due to a lack of personal protective equipment.

**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.