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

*Week ending 26th April*

**COVID-19 general updates**

**COVID-19 Update: Pandemic posters mailed to pharmacies**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have announced that a pack of pandemic resources for display in pharmacies are being sent to contractors this week via Royal Mail. They are expected to be delivered by the end of this week but can be downloaded from the PHE website. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-update-pandemic-posters-being-mailed-to-pharmacies/>

**Bodies call for temporary removal of the prescription charge**

PSNC, the British Medical Association (BMA) and Dispensing Doctors Association (DDA) have written to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, to highlight some of the challenges and risks faced by those dispensing and accessing prescriptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more in the following news story: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/bodies-call-for-temporary-removal-of-the-prescription-charge/>

**COVID-19 related payments: How and when will they be made**

A number of new COVID-19 related payments for community pharmacy contractors have been announced in recent weeks. Here we summarise how to claim for these payments (if required) and when each payment will be made. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-related-payments-how-and-when-they-will-be-made/>

**Operational updates**

**Contractor Update: 8th May Bank Holiday Opening**

When NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) said that they are considering asking community pharmacies to open on the 8th May Bank Holiday, PSNC provided an update to contractors. Read more here: [https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-update-8th-may-bank-holiday-opening/](http://h)

**NHSE&I intentions for Friday 8th May Bank Holiday**

In the COVID-19 Primary Care Bulletin email, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) confirmed its expectations for community pharmacy opening on the next bank holiday, Friday 8th May. More information is available here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/nhsei-intentions-for-friday-8th-may-bank-holiday/>

**NHS IT**

**NHS Digital’s COVID-19 EPS work**

NHS Digital’s work to support the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic includes work across several EPS-related projects. This news story highlights some of the work that is relevant to community pharmacy teams.

Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/nhs-digitals-covid-19-eps-work/>

**Pharmacy news in the national media**

[ITV News](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2020-04-22/pharmacists-fearing-contracting-covid-19-at-work-with-lack-of-ppe/) reported on a survey by the RPS which found that pharmacists are still unable to access continuous supplies of PPE. Almost 95% of respondents said they could not maintain the recommended two-metre distance from colleagues due to the size of the workplace.

**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.