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

*Week ending 5th April*

**COVID-19**

**Easter Opening Hours for Pharmacies**

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) has announced that it will require all community pharmacies in England to open **from 2pm to 5pm** **on 10 April 2020 (Good Friday) and 13 April 2020 (Easter Monday).**

The requirement is being made under the [National Health Service (Amendments Relating to the Provision of Primary Care Services During a Pandemic etc.](https://psnc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Emergency-legislation-%E2%80%93-opening-hours.pdf)) Regulations 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-easter-opening-hours-for-pharmacies/>

Prior to this announcement, PSNC communicated NHSE&’s intention to do so as it recognised that the ambiguity at this late stage was unhelpful. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-update-pharmacies-to-be-required-to-open-on-good-friday-and-easter-monday/>

The national pharmacy organisations also issued a joint statement about the expected changes to Easter opening hours. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-update-easter-2020-opening-hours/>

**COVID-19 Funding Update: Minsters agree £300 million cash injection**

Ministers have agreed to inject a total of £300 million of advance funding into community pharmacies over the next two months in recognition of the significant cashflow pressures facing the sector at this point in the COVID-19 pandemic. The payments will need to be reconciled at a later date and they will be paid as ‘uplifts’ to contractors’ January and February payments which are payable in early April and May. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-funding-update-ministers-agree-300-million-cash-injection/>

**COVID-19 Update: Protection of staff and managing supply**

The latest COVID-19 preparedness letter for community pharmacy from NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) provides further guidance and information on support for pharmacy teams. It includes news that NHSE&I will make a £300 payment to all pharmacies, except distance-selling pharmacies, to support the installation of such protective barriers for staff. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-update-protection-of-staff-and-managing-supply/>

**COVID-19 Negotiations Update: Delivery Service, PPE and opening hours**

PSNC issued an update on some of its ongoing COVID-19 related negotiations with NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), including urgent discussions on the Pandemic Delivery Service, Easter opening hours and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-negotiations-update-delivery-service-ppe-and-opening-hours/>

**COVID-19: Revised PPE guidance issued**

Public Health England’s (PHE) updated [guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control), issued 2nd April 2020, now recommends use of fluid-resistant surgical masks in pharmacies when working in an area with possible or confirmed cases and where pharmacy teams are unable to maintain 2 metres social distance. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-revised-ppe-guidance-issued/>

**National bodies urge public to treat high street pharmacy teams with respect**

The national pharmacy organisations issued a joint statement asking patients to treat pharmacy staff with respect, after hearing accounts from some pharmacy staff who were being subjected to physical and verbal abuse from customers looking to stockpile medicines and other products. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/national-bodies-urge-public-to-treat-high-street-pharmacy-teams-with-respect/>

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

An additional 52 medicines have been added to the list of medicines which must not be parallel exported from the UK. The restriction will be in place from 00:00am 01 April 2020. The new restrictions cover crucial medicines such as: inhalers, certain antibiotics and codeine. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/further-medicines-added-to-the-list-of-medicines-that-cannot-be-parallel-exported-from-the-uk-3/>

**Other key news**

**Retrospective Price Adjustment**

Retrospective price adjustment for Omeprazole 10mg/5ml and 20mg/5ml oral suspension SF and Melatonin 1mg/ml oral solution AF. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/retrospective-price-adjustment-for-omeprazole-10mg-5ml-and-20mg-5ml-oral-suspension-sugar-free-and-melatonin-1mg-ml-oral-solution-alcohol-free/>

**Pharmacy news in the national media**

[The Times](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/intimidated-pharmacists-call-in-police-8qjshmwkg) reports that intimidated pharmacists are having to call the police as frustrated patients are becoming abusive.

BBC News features a video piece, [Inside a pharmacy coping with coronavirus](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-52008198/coronavirus-inside-a-community-pharmacy-under-pressure), in which Marc Borson, a community pharmacist in Manchester, explains what it is like on the frontline. The pharmacy has installed 6 foot high perspex framing around the counters and in their consultation room to provide some protection from potentially infected patients. There is also some discussion about price rises.

[The Mail](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8146657/UK-pharmacists-not-given-protective-masks-gloves-clothing-amid-coronavirus-outbreak.html) reports that pharmacies are worried they have been 'completely forgotten' by the government due to inadequate supplies of PPE.

[The Mail](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8150745/MoD-NHS-start-work-transforming-Londons-ExCel-Centre-5-000-bed-hospital.html) features a piece showing a pharmacist - fully covered in protective clothing - delivering medicines to a patient's home. The photos also show how the pharmacist is practicing social distancing measures while making the delivery.

[iNews](https://inews.co.uk/news/health/pharmacies-stockpiling-drugs-paracetamol-public-chemists-2507804) reports that pharmacies are urging people to stop stockpiling medicines and medical devices. The piece states that officials have said while there is a huge increase in demand for items such as paracetamol and thermometers, there is no overall shortage of prescription medicines. The NPA are also quoted.

**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.