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

 *Week ending 24th May*

**COVID-19 general updates**

**DHSC to inject £15 million increase into reimbursement prices**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) will increase medicine reimbursement prices by £15 million in June, it announced last week. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/dhsc-to-inject-15m-increase-into-reimbursement-prices/>

**COVID-19 symptom guidance updated to cover loss of smell and taste**

A [**joint statement**](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers-on-an-update-to-coronavirus-symptoms-18-march-2020?utm_source=da50a8b6-4a1c-4092-bfce-4bea6862f2fe&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate) from the four Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland announced that from today a new symptom has been added to guidance advising the public on when to self-isolate. Any individuals who develop a new continuous cough, or fever, or experiences a loss of smell or taste (Anosmia), should self-isolate immediately. Read more: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-symptom-guidance-updated-to-cover-loss-of-smell-or-taste/>

**Provisional registration policy for pre-registration trainees**

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) has announced its intention to add current pre-registration trainees to the pharmacist register on a provisional basis. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/provisional-registration-for-pre-registration-trainees/>

**CPPE Corner: New COVID-19 learning resource hub**

The Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) has brought together a range of educational materials to support pharmacy professionals through the COVID-19 pandemic. Here we find out more about their new hub. Read more and access the resources here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/cppe-corner-new-covid-19-learning-resource-hub/>

**SSP issued for Fluoxetine 40mg capsules: urgent actions required by pharmacy teams**

In response to significant ongoing disruption to the supply of Fluoxetine 40mg capsules, a Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) was been issued by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) coming into effect on Wednesday 20th May 2020. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/ssp-issued-for-fluoxetine-40mg-capsules-urgent-actions-required-by-pharmacy-teams/>

**Guidance for commissioners and providers of services for people who use drugs and alcohol**

COVID-19 [**guidance for commissioners and service providers for those dependent on drugs or alcohol**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-commissioners-and-providers-of-services-for-people-who-use-drugs-or-alcohol) has been published. The updated guidance highlights that people who misuse or are dependent on drugs and alcohol may also be at increased risk of becoming infected, and infecting others, with coronavirus (COVID-19). People in these groups may also be more vulnerable to poor health outcomes due to underlying conditions. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/guidance-for-commissioners-and-providers-of-services-for-people-who-use-drugs-or-alcohol/>

**PSNC presses for new approach to script switching during COVID-19 pandemic**

PSNC has raised concerns about the appropriateness of prescription switching during the COVID-19 pandemic with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/psnc-presses-for-new-approach-to-script-switching-during-covid-19-pandemic/>

**Claims process announced for death in service benefits scheme**

Full details of the Government’s life assurance scheme for frontline healthcare workers have now been released. The scheme will make a payment of £60,000 to the estate of eligible individuals who die from COVID-19 contracted during their frontline essential work. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/claims-process-announced-for-death-in-service-benefits-scheme/>

**Pharmacist Support launches pharmacy staff wellbeing campaign**

A new campaign to help pharmacists and pharmacy students to prioritise their wellbeing has been launched by [**Pharmacist Support**](https://pharmacistsupport.org/), the profession’s independent charity. The COVID-19 outbreak has presented an uncertain and unprecedented situation for the sector, putting pressure on all community pharmacy teams. It can be difficult for pharmacy staff to find time to prioritise their own needs so the ACTNow campaign aims to raise awareness of the importance of wellbeing.

**Operational updates**

**Suspension of Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment renewals**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) announced that the requirement to publish renewed Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments (PNAs) will be suspended for a year. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/suspension-of-pharmaceutical-needs-assessments/>

**Pharmacies not automatically required to open on 25th May Bank Holiday**

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) confirmed that there would be no blanket requirement for all community pharmacies to open on the Spring Bank Holiday (25th May 2020). Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/pharmacies-not-automatically-required-to-open-on-25th-may-bank-holiday/>

**Appendix**

**Remember: Key actions to take during the pandemic**

Contractors and pharmacy teams can take the following actions to ensure they are well prepared:

* Read the [**NHSE&I guidance**](https://psnc.org.uk/the-healthcare-landscape/covid19/contractor-guidance-and-support/) **and implement its recommended actions;**
* 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;**
* 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;**
* 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**
* 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.