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

 *Week ending 3rd May*

**COVID-19 general updates**

**Contractor update: NHSE&I announcement on 8th May openings**

On Friday 1st May, in the COVID-19 Primary Care Bulletin email, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) has announced that pharmacies are required to open for 3 hours, **between 2pm and 5pm, on Friday 8th May 2020 (the early May Bank Holiday)**, as part of the NHS response to the pandemic. The fee to be paid to contractors for the bank holiday opening on 8th May will be the same as it was at Easter: **£250 an hour** **for a maximum of 3 hours**. Any pharmacy that is planning to open for longer hours or has been directed locally to open at a different time, should continue to do so. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-update-nhsei-announcement-on-8th-may-openings/>

**Death in service benefit for frontline healthcare workers**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has announced a new life assurance scheme for healthcare workers on the frontline in England. Whilst not specifically named in the initial announcement, Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock has confirmed that community pharmacists are included in the death in service benefits, explaining: “Because they are employed in a different way, it is arranged in a different way, but pharmacists are a vital part of our NHS family.” Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/death-in-service-benefits-for-frontline-healthcare-workers/>

**Claims for the Pandemic Delivery Service now open on MYS portal**

Community pharmacy contractors are now able to claim payment for the Pandemic Delivery Service on the [**Manage Your Service (MYS) portal**](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/dispensing-contractors-information/manage-your) via the Home Delivery Advanced Service link. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/claims-for-the-pandemic-delivery-service-now-open-on-mys-portal/>

**New Pandemic Delivery Service guide now available**

PSNC published a digital guide to the Pandemic Delivery Service for community pharmacy contractors. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/new-pandemic-delivery-service-guide-now-available/>

**Guidance published on medicines re-use in care homes and hospices**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England and NHS Improvement have published [**guidance on running a medicines re-use scheme in a care home or hospice setting**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reuse-of-medicines-in-a-care-home-or-hospice) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/guidance-published-on-medicines-re-use-in-care-homes-and-hospices/>

**PPE availability: Healthcare Distribution Association statement and guidance for contractors**

The Healthcare Distribution Association (HDA) has [**issued a statement**](https://hdauk.com/hda-news/hda-statement-regarding-availability-public-health-england-supplied-ppe-community-pharmacy) to inform pharmacy contractors that the stocks of surgical masks the Association’s member wholesalers have been able to purchase from the Government’s Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) stockpile have now almost completely run out. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/ppe-availability-hda-statement-and-guidance-for-contractors/>

**Update on staff testing for COVID-19**

A new portal for booking COVID-19 tests for key workers, including community pharmacy team members, is now available for use by team members and employers. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/update-on-staff-testing-for-covid-19/>

**Pharmacy bodies create new hub to help pharmacists tell their NHS frontline stories**

PSNC and the National Pharmacy Association (NPA) have jointly created a media resource hub, to make it simpler for pharmacy teams and Local Pharmaceutical Committees (LPCs) to tell their NHS frontline stories, to newspapers and via social media. The aim is to use the recently intensified media interest in pharmacies and medicines to reinforce key messages. These include asking the public to be courteous to under-pressure staff and to respect social distancing in pharmacies. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/pharmacy-bodies-create-new-hub-to-help-pharmacists-tell-their-nhs-frontline-stories/>

**April edition of CPN magazine is out**

The April 2020 edition of PSNC’s Community Pharmacy News (CPN) is now available and is a COVID-19 special issue. View CPN online here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/april-edition-of-cpn-magazine-is-out/>

**April end of month submission reminder**

Community pharmacy contractors are reminded that they must continue to submit their monthly prescription bundles as usual. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/april-end-of-month-submission-reminder/>

**Operational updates**
**CF regulations amended for pandemic supply**

Changes to the [**Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001**](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2001/3998/contents/made) came into force on 30th April 2020 to provide Ministers with emergency powers for the supply of Controlled Drugs (CDs) in specific circumstances during a pandemic. The regulations are enabling so may be used only if ‘activated’ by Ministers and apply in very limited circumstances. The purpose of the changes is to ensure community pharmacies can continue to supply patients with essential medicines at critical times during a pandemic, such as the COVID-19 outbreak. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/cd-regulations-amended-for-pandemic-supply/>

**Market entry suspension clarified**

On 25th March 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) suspended the processing and determination of market entry applications *to allow staff who work on these tasks to be redeployed to functions which have higher priority during the current pandemic* and to ensure contractors were protected from the need to read and respond to applications at the early stages of the outbreak. PSNC has been working with NHSE&I to clarify the suspension. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/market-entry-suspension-clarified/>

**NHS IT**

**COVID-19: Extending access to SCR for locums**

NHS Digital have extended access to the NHS Summary Care Record (SCR) to support community pharmacy teams to work efficiently and flexibly in response to COVID-19 in an initiative supported by PSNC and NHS England and NHS Improvement. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-extending-access-to-scr-for-locums/>

**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.