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

*Week ending 10th May*

**COVID-19 general updates**

**DHSC confirms the Government’s safety net indemnity applies to community pharmacy**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has confirmed that community pharmacy is covered by the Government’s safety net indemnity provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020. DHSC has confirmed that the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has made arrangements with NHS Resolution for the safety net indemnity to apply to community pharmacy. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/dhsc-confirms-the-governments-safety-net-indemnity-applies-to-community-pharmacy/>

**Pandemic Delivery Service: Are you clear on how to deliver it?**

The Pandemic Delivery Service went live on 9th April 2020 and early feedback from several contractors shows there is still confusion over patients’ eligibility and the process to confirm patient inclusion in the service. In addition, the use of volunteers is still very variable, but the NHS remains committed to ensuring their use during the pandemic. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/pandemic-delivery-service-are-you-clear-on-how-to-deliver-it/>

**Dealing with returned medicines during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The national pharmacy bodies have published guidance on dealing with unwanted medicines that have been returned to community pharmacies. This guidance has been compiled to help contractors determine how best to safely handle returned unwanted medicines at this time. It contains a list of considerations and a suggested procedure, as well as checklists to work through. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/dealing-with-returned-medicines-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

**Is it time to review your social distancing and infection control procedures?**

PSNC has published a risk assessment template will help pharmacy teams to identify further potential changes which could be made to their pharmacy environment or procedures during the pandemic to increase the safety of staff and patients. Read more and download the risk assessment template here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/is-it-time-to-review-your-social-distancing-and-infection-control-procedures/>

**Yellow Card reporting site for healthcare products used in COVID-19 treatment**

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has launched a dedicated Yellow Card reporting site for healthcare products that are used in Coronavirus (COVID-19) treatment to be easily reported. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/yellow-card-reporting-site-for-healthcare-products-used-in-covid-19-treatment/>

**Social media resources to promote pharmacy opening hours**

Community pharmacy teams have been working tirelessly as the COVID-19 outbreak has developed, including opening on the Early May Bank Holiday (Friday 8th May). PSNC collated some graphics and resources for LPCs and contractors to use on social media to help promote this. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/social-media-resources-to-help-promote-pharmacy-opening-hours/>

**Operational updates**

**Temporary closures: Updating the NHS website**

With more patients using online services due to COVID-19, it is important to keep the opening times on your NHS website profile up-to-date and to reflect any temporary closures. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/temporary-closures-updating-the-nhs-website/>

**RPS guidance issues on new CD regulations for pandemic supply**

Three changes to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (MDRs) [**came into force last week**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/cd-regulations-amended-for-pandemic-supply/), which provide Ministers with emergency powers for the supply of controlled drugs (CDs). 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. The regulations are enabling so may be used only if ‘activated’ or ‘switched on’ by Ministers and apply in very limited circumstances. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) issued [**guidance for pharmacists on the legislation and associated professional practice considerations**](https://www.rpharms.com/resources/pharmacy-guides/controlled-drugs-contingency-legislation). The guidance was developed in consultation with the pharmacy sector including PSNC and more information is available here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/rps-guidance-issued-on-new-cd-regulations-for-pandemic-supply/>

**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.