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

 *Week ending 17th May*

**COVID-19 general updates**

**COVID-19 negotiations update: New video message from PSNC CEO**

PSNC Chief Executive Simon Dukes has recorded a new video message for community pharmacy teams to explain some of the work that he and his team are doing on behalf of the sector. Watch Simon’s video here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-negotiations-update-new-video-message-from-psnc-ceo/>

**Annual flu letter published 2020/2021**

The Department of Health and Social Care, Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement have jointly published a [letter](https://psnc.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=86d41ab7fa4c7c2c5d7210782&id=aa4beb9208&e=56458050bb) to provide further information on the national flu immunisation programme for 2020–21. The letter notes that this coming winter we may be faced with co-circulation of COVID-19 and flu. There will undoubtedly be some changes to the way in which the NHS flu vaccination service is delivered this year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and new social distancing requirements. As usual, PSNC will be negotiating those details with NHSE&I as soon as they

are in a position to do so. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/annual-flu-letter-published-for-2020-21/>

**May Drug Tariff Updates**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has made some retrospective adjustments to the May 2020 Drug Tariff to incorporate some new arrangements in light of the COVID-19 pandemic response. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/may-drug-tariff-updates-300-for-staff-protection-and-coa-coc-requirements/>

**Extension of death in service benefit to pharmacy teams**

Matt Hancock, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, has confirmed that the death in service benefit for frontline healthcare workers has been extended to pharmacy teams, as well as pharmacists.

Writing to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Mr Hancock confirmed that the Life Assurance Scheme now includes registered pharmacy technicians, dispensing assistants and medicine counter assistants. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/extension-of-death-in-service-benefits-to-pharmacy-teams/>

**COVID-19 support: Wellbeing during challenging times**

Pharmacists and their teams have been spending all of their time through this pandemic serving their patients and their communities. To support the wellbeing of NHS staff, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) has previously issued information on a series of psychological support, which is available for those working in primary care during the COVID-19 outbreak. The initial offer involves free access to a number of wellbeing apps from now until the end of December 2020. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-support-wellbeing-during-challenging-times/>

**Operational updates**

**Contractor Update: 25th May Bank Holiday opening**

During last week’s COVID-19 Community Pharmacy Webinar, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) stated that they are hoping to revert to standard locally determined opening arrangements for the Spring Bank Holiday on 25th May 2020. Further information available here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-update-25th-may-bank-holiday-opening/>

**Market entry activity resumed**

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) announced that, as part of its overall recovery plan to restore services paused during the lockdown, staff are now being returned to their Market Entry roles and resuming work to process applications, and that full market entry function will be resumed from 1 June 2020. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/market-entry-activity-resumed/>

**NHS IT**

**Reminder: Additional information within SCR during pandemic**

Community pharmacy contractors are reminded that, as part of work to support the ongoing fight against COVID-19, NHS Digital has previously announced that [**additional information**](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/summary-care-records-scr/additional-information-in-scr) has been added to most patients’ NHS Summary Care Records (SCR). Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/reminder-additional-information-within-scr-during-pandemic/

**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.