**Key News and Guidance for LPCs**

*Week ending 28th June*

**COVID-19 general updates**

**Government announces plans for changes to shielding**

Last week Matt Hancock, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced the Government’s plans to [ease guidance for the 2.2 million people who have been shielding](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-to-ease-guidance-for-over-2-million-shielding) since the start of the pandemic. From Monday 6th July 2020, those shielding from coronavirus can gather in groups of up to six people outdoors and they can also form a ‘support bubble’ with another household. The Government shielding support package will remain in place until the end of July, when extremely vulnerable people will no longer be advised to shield. From Saturday 1st August 2020, the guidance will then be relaxed so clinically extremely vulnerable people will no longer be advised to shield, but support will remain available from NHS volunteers and local councils. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/government-announces-plans-for-changes-to-shielding/>

**COVID-19 payments for July 2020**

A number of COVID-19 related payments for community pharmacy contractors have been announced in recent months. Here we summarise how to claim for these payments (if required) and how each payment will be made for the month of July. PSNC has made representations to Government about the immense pressure pharmacies are under and the need for an urgent funding injection to the sector to ease cashflow. In the meantime, some payment adjustments have been implemented for the required Bank Holidays, the Pandemic Delivery Service and the installation of protective barriers. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-notice-covid-19-payments-for-july-2020/>

**NHSE&I request urgent completion of staff risk assessments**

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have written to NHS providers, including community pharmacy contractors, requesting the urgent completion of staff risk assessments. In light of the new risks to healthcare staff posed by the COVID-19 outbreak, [the letter from NHSE&I](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/risk-assessments-for-at-risk-staff-groups-letter/) outlines the responsibilities of employers as well as the support available to help them. In particular, NHSE&I set a deadline saying that individual risk assessments for at least staff in at-risk groups (including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff) should be completed within the next four weeks. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/nhsei-request-urgent-completion-of-staff-risk-assessments/>

**COVID-19 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**](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/primary-care/) **webpage 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.