

September 2020

PSNC Briefing 028/20: Pharmacy opening hours in 2021

Are you aware of pharmacy opening hour requirements in the terms of service? Here we explain all you need to know for the public holidays in 2021.

PSNC's Regulations and Support Team are often asked questions about the requirements in the terms of service relating to opening hours. We have therefore produced this quick reference guide for 2021.

Name of holiday	Date in 2021	Day of the week	Covered by the Regulations?	Can the pharmacy close without giving notice?
New Years' Day*	1 st January	Friday	✓	✓
Good Friday	2 nd April	Friday	✓	✓
Easter Sunday	4 th April	Sunday	✓	✓
Easter Monday*	5 th April	Monday	✓	✓
Early May Bank Holiday*	3 rd May	Monday	✓	✓
Spring Bank Holiday*	31 st May	Monday	✓	✓
Summer Bank Holiday*	30 th August	Monday	✓	✓
Christmas Day	25 th December	Saturday	✓	✓
Christmas Day (substitute day)*	27 th December	Monday	✓	✓
Boxing Day (substitute day)*	28 th December	Tuesday	✓	✓

**These are not specifically mentioned by name but because they are official 'bank holidays' they are covered by the Regulations.*

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I close my pharmacy on these days?

Yes. Community pharmacy contractors can close their pharmacies on days which are specifically mentioned in the Regulations (namely Christmas Day, Good Friday and Easter Sunday) or a day which has been designated as a '[bank holiday](#)', unless directed to open by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I).

2. What about my core contractual hours?

A pharmacy will be treated as having been open for its usual hours on that day for the purpose of counting the core contractual hours that week. Therefore, the pharmacy can be closed on the days indicated without giving notice or applying to change the core hours.

3. Are there any circumstances when I must open on these days?

Yes, if a contractor has been directed to open their pharmacy by NHSE&I.

4. Can I close my pharmacy early any other time?

If the hours that the contractor wishes to close early are supplementary hours, then notice of that intention should be given at least three months in advance. If they are core hours, then an application is needed, and the contractor would have to satisfy NHSE&I that there have been changes to the needs of people in the area, otherwise the application is likely to be refused.

Unless you have notified NHSE&I of changes to your supplementary hours at least three months before the date, or applied successfully for amendment of core hours, the contractor will not be able to close early.

5. Do I need to notify NHSE&I of opening intentions on bank holidays / public holidays?

Contractors are encouraged to inform NHSE&I whether their premises will be open on bank holidays. This information is of critical importance to NHSE&I to plan pharmacy provision during holiday periods.

If NHSE&I is not able to determine the opening hours of pharmacies with a high degree of certainty, its only option may be to issue directions to one or more pharmacies requiring them to open.

This clearly is not in the best interests of pharmacies if there are others that would have been open; so PSNC recommends that all pharmacies notify their intentions and then open as they have notified.

NHSE&I has published template forms to provide notification: www.england.nhs.uk/publication/pharmacy-manual-chapter-36-annexes

Further information

NB: Please note that there:

- a) have been changes to opening hours regulations due to the COVID-19 outbreak; and
- b) **are planned changes to the Terms of Service that will require contractors to keep their NHS Directory of Service (DoS) and NHS website entries up to date (former quality standards criteria).**

For more information, including a comprehensive list of FAQs, please visit: psnc.org.uk/hours

If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information, please contact [Layla Rahman, Regulations Officer](#).