**Key News and Guidance for LPCs**

 *Week ending 20th September*

**Flu**

PSNC has published a digital guide to the Flu Vaccination Service for community pharmacy contractors. The guide aims to offer busy contractors and pharmacists an alternative way to ensure they are aware of what is available to support them with the provision of the service and complements the other information and guidance available on our [**Flu Vaccination Service Hub**](https://psnc.org.uk/services-commissioning/advanced-services/flu-vaccination-service/). Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/new-flu-vaccination-service-2020-21-digital-guide-now-available/>

**CPCF**

**GP referrals to CPCS to commence this autumn**

At its September 2020 meeting, PSNC agreed proposals that general practice referrals into the [**Community Pharmacist Consultation Service**](https://psnc.org.uk/services-commissioning/advanced-services/community-pharmacist-consultation-service/) (CPCS) should commence this autumn. Work is now underway to plan the roll out of the service, which will engage general practices across England, supporting them to make referrals of patients to community pharmacists for minor illness consultations. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/gp-referrals-to-cpcs-to-commence-this-autumn/>

**CPCF health campaigns agreed for 2020/21**

Each year, pharmacies are required to participate in up to six public health campaigns at the request of NHSE&I. The topics of these are agreed by NHSE&I and PSNC. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/cpcf-health-campaigns-agreed-for-2020-21/>

**PQS Aspiration payment window opens**

The Aspiration payment window for the Pharmacy Quality Scheme 2020/21 Part 2 is now open. Contractors who wish to, can claim an Aspiration payment for this scheme, to assist with cash flow. The Aspiration payment can be claimed up until 23:59 on 9th October 2020 through the [**MYS portal**](https://services.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-prescription-services-submissions/login). Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/pqs-aspiration-payment-window-opens/>

**Contractor guidance on the Hep C testing service**

The Community Pharmacy Hepatitis C Antibody Testing Service is the second new Advanced Service to be added to the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF). The service was originally trailed as part of the [**5-year CPCF agreement**](https://psnc.org.uk/contract-it/the-pharmacy-contract/cpcf-settlement-2019-20-to-2023-24/) and its implementation was delayed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The service launched on the 1st September 2020. PSNC has published a Briefing providing guidance for community pharmacy contractors and their teams on the Community Pharmacy Hepatitis C Antibody Testing Service. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/guidance-on-the-community-pharmacy-hepatitis-c-antibody-testing-service/>

**Regs**

**Boxing Day 2020 Opening Hours**

Contractors are reminded that this year Boxing Day (26 December 2020) is a Saturday, a normal day for the purposes of community pharmacy opening hours. Therefore, pharmacies must open on the 26th for any core and supplementary hours. The substitute bank holiday for Boxing Day this year is Monday 28 December, when contractors do not have to open. If contractors want to reduce any supplementary hours, for example, to close early, they must give notice to NHSE&I at least 3 months in advance, unless NHSE&I agrees otherwise. So, the last day to give notice for 26 December, for any guaranteed reduction in supplementary hours, is on 26 September, and NHSE&I must receive the notification, for example, by email, on or before that date. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/boxing-day-2020-opening-hours/>

**Testing**

**Test and Trace – disagreeing with assessments and escalating the case**

Contractors are reminded that if they disagree with an assessment or an identification of a recent close contact by an NHS Test and Trace contact tracer, they should ask to speak to his or her supervisor, so that the case can be escalated and reviewed. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/test-and-trace-disagreeing-with-assessments-and-escalating-the-case/>

**Accessing priority COVID-19 testing**

Community pharmacists and their staff are classed as [**essential workers who are prioritised for testing**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#list-of-essential-workers-and-those-prioritised-for-testing-england-only) and employers can refer essential workers for testing if they are self-isolating because either they or members of their household have coronavirus symptoms. They can do this by uploading the names and contact details of self-isolating essential workers to the secure employer referral portal. Referred essential workers will then receive a text message with a unique invitation code to [**book a test for themselves**](https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/register/validate-code) (if symptomatic) or their symptomatic household members at a testing site. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/accessing-priority-c-19-testing/>

**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.