**Key News and Guidance for LPCs**

 *Week ending 1st November*

**General/COVID**

**Commencement of GP referrals to CPCS**

From 1 November 2020, the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) has been extended to include referrals from general practices as well as from NHS 111.

Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/commencement-of-gp-referrals-to-cpcs/>

**GP referrals to CPCS: essential information for contractors**

More information for contractors on the above. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/gp-referrals-to-cpcs-essential-information-for-contractors/>

**Requirement to sign prescriptions suspended from November 2020**

The Government has temporarily suspended the requirement for patients (or their representatives) to sign the back of NHS prescription forms or EPS tokens. This change comes into effect from 1 November 2020 and will last initially until 31 March 2021. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/requirement-to-sign-prescriptions-suspended-from-november-2020/>

**Updated COVID-19 SOP introduces local management of flexible opening hours**

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have issued an updated Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for community pharmacies in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/updated-covid-19-sop-introduces-local-management-of-flexible-opening-hours/>

**Reminder: PHE leaflet on availability of flu vac**

The Department of Health and Social Care, Public Health England (PHE) and the NHS have published a leaflet for the public, which explains why some people eligible for flu vaccination are being asked to wait to get vaccinated. Download the leaflet here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/reminder-phe-leaflet-on-availability-of-flu-vac/>

**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.