**Key News and Guidance for LPCs**

*Week ending 15th November*

**General/COVID**

**COVID-19 cost negotiations update: PSNC rejects initial offer and makes counter proposal**

Last week PSNC restated its position that community pharmacy contractors must be compensated for the full impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their businesses. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-cost-negotiations-update-psnc-rejects-initial-offer-and-makes-counter-proposal/>

**GP referrals to CPCS: Engagement and setup payment**

From 1st November 2020, the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) was extended across England to include minor illness referrals from general practices as well as from NHS 111. Contractors registered to provide the CPCS will be able to support this local preparatory work and they can claim a £300 engagement and setup payment if they undertake a range of actions to get ready for rolling out the referral pathway in their area. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/gp-referrals-to-cpcs-engagement-and-setup-payment/>

**Have you signed up to the NHS service finder?**

[**NHS Service Finder**](https://finder.directoryofservices.nhs.uk/#/login) is a free online search tool which provides access to information from the [**Directory of Services (DoS)**](https://psnc.org.uk/contract-it/pharmacy-it/databases-of-pharmacies-and-services/directory-of-services-dos/) and nhs.uk. It is not accessible by the public, but it does allow pharmacy team members and other healthcare professionals to search for service information quickly, allowing a patient to be signposted to the most appropriate service for their needs. The system includes maps and directions to the services, plus the ability to email service information directly to your patient. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/have-you-signed-up-to-use-nhs-service-finder/>

**Contractor guidance on the suspension of patient signatures on prescription forms**

PSNC has published updated [**guidance**](https://psnc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PSNC-Briefing-040.20-Requirement-to-sign-prescriptions-suspended-dispensing-and-submission-guidance.pdf) on the dispensing and end of month submission process following the [**temporary suspension**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/requirement-to-sign-prescriptions-suspended-from-november-2020/) of the requirement for patients (or their representatives) to sign the back of NHS prescription forms or EPS tokens. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-guidance-on-the-suspension-of-patient-signatures-on-prescription-forms/>

**Preparations for a potential COVID-19 vaccination programme**

Since news broke on the positive trials of a COVID-19 vaccine by Pfizer, there has been much speculation about how a vaccination programme might work and how quickly it will be rolled out. Although little detail has been published about how community pharmacy will be involved, PSNC provided an update: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/preparations-for-a-potential-covid-19-vaccination-programme/>

**Independent Review Update: New review steering group to take forward recommendations**

Read the following news article for an update on the latest developments re Professor David Wright’s independent review into contractor representation: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/independent-review-update-new-review-steering-group-to-take-forward-work-on-contractor-support-and-representation/>

**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.