**Key News and Guidance for LPCs**

 *Week ending 20th December*

**General/COVID**

**Community pharmacy already playing its part in COVID-19 vaccination**

Despite the practical challenges of providing a COVID-19 vaccination service using the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, many contractors have stepped forward to play their part in the NHS programme to help run designated vaccination sites. Read more about efforts so far: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/community-pharmacy-already-playing-its-part-in-covid-19-vaccination/>

**COVID-19 lateral flow testing for pharmacy staff**

On 16 December 2020, NHSE&I published a letter to all primary care contractors announcing how they could order lateral flow testing for all asymptomatic patient-facing NHS staff. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-lateral-flow-testing-for-pharmacy-staff/>

**Guidance on use of DHSC flu vac stock updated**

The DHSC updated its guidance on the use of government procured flu vaccines by pharmacy contractors. The change to the guidance now allows contractors to use the DHSC procured stock to vaccinate frontline health and social care workers through occupational health schemes or through private vaccination arrangements, where previously this was not allowed. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/guidance-on-use-of-dhsc-flu-vac-stock-updated/>

**APPG issues report warning of pressures on pharmacies**

The All-Party Pharmacy Group has published a report following its inquiry into the pressures of COVID-19 on the pharmacy sector, which has warned that some pharmacies could be forced to close unless further Government support is pledged. Access the report and read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/appg-issues-report-warning-of-pressures-on-pharmacies/>

**December meeting of the Community Pharmacy Brexit Forum**

Read the following article for an update of the latest meeting of the Community Pharmacy Brexit Forum: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/december-meeting-of-the-community-pharmacy-brexit-forum/>

**January 2021 Category M prices announced**

The Drug Tariff Category M pricelist for January 2011 was published on the NHSBSA website. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/january-category-m-prices-announced/>

**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.