**Key News and Guidance for LPCs**

 *Week ending 28th March*

**Last week’s news stories:**

**Enhancements made to NHS Service Finder**

NHS Digital have announced several improvements to their [NHS Service Finder](https://finder.directoryofservices.nhs.uk/#/login) online search tool. You can read about these improvements here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/nhs-service-finder-enhancements/>

**Terms of Service Changes for DSPs from 1st April**

From 1st April 2021, the NHS Terms of Service require **Distance Selling Premises** (DSP) pharmacies to have a **website which includes content promoting healthy lifestyles**. Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/reminder-terms-of-service-changes-for-dsps-from-1st-april/

**MHRA Drug Safety Update March 2021**

A new Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) Drug Safety Update has been published. Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/mhra-drug-safety-update-march-2021/

**SSP issued for Competact®15mg/850mg tablets: Urgent actions required by pharmacy teams**

In response to significant ongoing disruption to the supply of Competact® 15mg/850mg tablets, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) issued a Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) with immediate effect on the 24th of March. This SSP **currently expires on Wednesday 7th May 2021. Read more about this SSP here:** <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/ssp-issued-for-competact-15mg-850mg-tablets-urgent-actions-required-by-pharmacy-teams/>

**Supply Disruption Alert - Phenytoin Sodium NRIM 100mg capsules (Accord)**

On the 25th of March, the DHSC issued a supply disruption alert for Phenytoin Sodium NRIM 100mg capsules. However, this product is now back in stock. Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/supply-disruption-alert-phenytoin-sodium-nrim-100mg-capsules-accord/

**Medicine Supply Notification - Metronidazole (Acea) 0.75% gel**

A Medicine Supply Notification has been issued by the DHSC for Metronidazole (Acea) 0.75% gel. Resupply of this product is expected in mid-August 2021. Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/medicine-supply-notification-metronidazole-acea-0-75-gel/

**Medicine Supply Notification – Desmopressin (DDAVP) 0.01% w/v (100 micrograms/ml) intranasal solution**

The DHSC have advised that Desmopressin (DDAVP) 0.01% w/v (100 micrograms/ml) intranasal solution is now discontinued. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/medicine-supply-notification-ddavp-desmopressin-0-01-w-v-100-micrograms-ml-intranasal-solution/>

**Medicine Supply Notification -** **Competact tablets (Pioglitazone 15mg/Metformin 850mg)**

**On March 25th, the DHSC issued a Medicine Supply Notification for Competact tablets (Pioglitazone 15mg/Metformin 850mg). Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/medicine-supply-notification-competact-tablets-pioglitazone-15mg-metformin-850mg/**

**Medicine Supply Notification -** **Voriconazole (VFEND) 40mg/ml powder for oral suspension**

**The DHSC has issued a Medicine Supply Notification for Voriconazole (VFEND) 40mg/ml powder for oral suspension: Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/medicine-supply-notification-vfend-voriconazole-40mg-ml-powder-for-oral-suspension/**

**Shielding for CEV patients to stop from 1st April 2021**

The Government has advised that from 1st April 2021 all clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) patients in England will **no longer be required to shield.** The Pandemic Delivery Service for CEV patients will finish on 31st March 2021. No further deliveries should be made to these patients, under the service, after this date. The service for **people who have been notified of the need to self-isolate** by NHS Test and Trace continues to be commissioned until 30th June 2021. Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/shielding-for-cev-patients-to-stop-from-1st-april-2021/

**April 2021 Category M prices announced**

The Drug Tariff Category M pricelist for April 2021 has been published on the **NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) website**. Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/april-2021-category-m-prices-announced/

**Update on 2021-22 flu vaccine ordering**

On 26th March, NHSE&I reported in its Primary Care Bulletin that 50 to 64 year olds are expected to be included as an eligible cohort for the 2021/22 flu vaccination season. Read more here: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/update-on-2021-22-flu-vaccine-ordering/>

**SSP010 for Levothyroxine 12.5mcg tablets extended**

The DHSC has provided an update on the Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) for Levothyroxine 12.5mcg tablets (SSP010). SSP010 for Levothyroxine 12.5mcg tablets was previously expected to expire on 26th March 2021 but the end date has been further extended to **1st April 2021**. Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-notice-ssp010-for-levothyroxine-12-5mcg-extended/

**March 2021 Price Concessions 2nd Update**

The DHSC has issued its 2nd Price Concessions Update for March 2021. Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/march-2021-price-concessions-2nd-update/

**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.