**Key News and Guidance for LPCs**

*Week ending 22nd August*

**Last week’s news stories:**

**MHRA Class 2 Medicines Recall Update: Irbesartan-containing products**

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) Class 2 Medicines Recall notice for Irbesartan-containing products has been updated. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/mhra-class-2-medicines-recall-irbesartan-containing-products/**

**August 2021 Price Concessions First Update**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has published the initial list of price concessions for August 2021. Read more here: [**https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/august-2021-price-concessions-1st-update/**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/august-2021-price-concessions-1st-update/)

**Volunteers needed to test referrals into the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme**

PSNC, on behalf of NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I), is seeking to recruit volunteers to participate in testing the referral process for the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme. Volunteers will help shape the weight management referral process announced in the [**2021/22 Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS)**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/new-pharmacy-quality-scheme-for-2021-22-announced/) and have early sight of this system before the PQS starts on 1st September 2021. Read more here: [**https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/get-involved-nhs-digital-weight-management-programme-pqs/**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/get-involved-nhs-digital-weight-management-programme-pqs/)

**New guidance on COVID-19 vaccination requirements when working or deployed in care homes**

DHSC has published guidance on new [**regulations**](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2021/9780348224993?view=plain) which make COVID-19 vaccination a requirement for people working or deployed in care homes. The regulations will come into force on **11th November 2021** and apply to community pharmacy contractors providing services to care homes. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/new-guidance-on-covid-19-vaccination-requirements-when-working-or-deployed-in-care-homes/**

**IT case study: Leeds pharmacist explains the benefits of RTEC**

Real Time Exemption Checking (RTEC) is a technical solution enabling the PMR system to automatically find out whether a patient has a known prescription charge exemption that can automatically apply to their Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) prescription. In this case study, David Broome, a pharmacist, and pharmacy contractor from Leeds outlines how RTEC helps his work and contributes to a more paperless process within the pharmacy. Read the case study here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/it-case-study-leeds-pharmacist-explains-rtec-benefits/**

**National Patient Safety Alert: Synthetics Opioids**

A National Patient Safety Alert has been issued by Public Health England (PHE) regarding concerns around drug overdoses possibly linked to potent synthetic opioids. The safety alert contains urgent actions for all organisations where staff may encounter people who use drugs, such as providers of drug treatment and prevention services. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/patient-safety-alert-synthetic-opioids/**

**Changes to CPCS IT and Procurement**

The national procurement model currently in place to support community pharmacy contractors to deliver the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) has been extended to the **end of March 2022**. From this date, contractors providing the CPCS will be required to procure their own CPCS IT system from one of the assured providers, so contractors are encouraged to make the most of this additional time to choose their supplier. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/cpcs-it-change-to-funding-and-procurement/**

**Contractor case study: Implementing the GP CPCS**

The CPCS was extended to include [**referrals from general practices**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/commencement-of-gp-referrals-to-cpcs/) in November 2020. Clark’s Chemist in Barnsley is one of the many pharmacies now receiving a significant number of minor illness referrals from general practices every week. PSNC spoke to the Pharmacist at Clark’s Chemist, to find out how the pharmacy went about getting the GP CPCS set up. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-case-study-implementing-the-gp-cpcs/**

**CPCS – When is it complete?**

Contractors commonly ask our Services Team when a CPCS referral can be considered as complete and so eligible to be claimed for at the end of the month. PSNC has now produced a guide to help contractors decide when a CPCS referral is complete. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/cpcs-when-is-it-complete/**

**End of temporary suspension of signatures on prescriptions**

The temporary suspension of the requirement for patients (or their representatives) to sign the reverse of NHS prescription forms or EPS tokens is due to end on **31st August 2021**. In addition, the submission requirement of certain EPS tokens to the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) is also due to resume from **1st September**. Whilst PSNC awaits confirmation from DHSC on these changes, we advise contractors to start making plans to return to capturing signatures on NHS prescriptions/tokens and to review the current submission processes to include relevant tokens with monthly bundles from September. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/temporary-suspension-of-signature-and-token-submission-requirements-extended/**

**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, face coverings 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.