**Key News and Guidance for LPCs**

 *Week ending 14th November*

**Last week’s news stories:**

**Post-payment verification activity for Out of Pocket expense claims**

The Provider Assurance team, part of the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA), has started undertaking a review of Out of Pocket (OOP) expense claims. The review, commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I), has identified a minority of outlier pharmacies with significantly higher OOP expense claims compared to other pharmacies. PSNC has been consulted on the proposed Post Payment Verification (PPV) process and has sought to ensure the process is appropriately targeted, proportionate and fair to those contractors asked to provide records. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/post-payment-verification-ppv-activity-for-out-of-pocket-oop-expense-claims/**

**Medicine Supply Notification updates**

Updates have been issued to the Medicine Supply Notifications for the following products:

* [**DDAVP (Desmopressin) 0.01% w/v (100 micrograms/ml) intranasal solution**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/medicine-supply-notification-ddavp-desmopressin-0-01-w-v-100-micrograms-ml-intranasal-solution/)
* [**Desmopressin (Octim®) 150 micrograms per actuation nasal spray**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/medicine-supply-notification-desmopressin-octim-150mcg-per-actuation-nasal-spray-ferring-pharmaceuticals/)
* [**Clexane® (enoxaparin) pre-filled syringes**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/medicine-supply-notification-clexane-enoxaparin-pre-filled-syringes/)

The Department of Health and Social Care has also issued a Medicine Supply Notification for **Xylocaine® 1% and 2% (lidocaine) with adrenaline. Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/medicine-supply-notification-xylocaine-1-and-2-lidocaine-with-adrenaline-100micrograms-20ml-1200000-solution-for-injection-vials/**

**Flu vac: updated PGD and national protocol published**

Following the [**announcement**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/flu-vac-frontline-primary-care-staff-added-to-advanced-service/) of additional funding to support provision of flu vaccinations to frontline primary care staff, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have approved the patient group direction (PGD) and national protocol for use by community pharmacy contractors, meaning vaccination of these staff as part of the service can now commence. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/flu-vac-updated-pgd-and-national-protocol-published/**

**Almost £16m investment in professional career development**

NHSE&I's Pharmacy Integration Programme will invest up to £15.9 million over the next four years in a boost to pharmacy professional career development. This money will be used to provide a range of training and development opportunities, such as training in independent prescribing for pharmacists working in community pharmacy. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/almost-16m-investment-in-professional-career-development/**

**Changing pharmacy opening hours in response to workforce pressures during the pandemic**

Self-isolation requirements and a lack of available pharmacists (amongst other things) mean that short-notice closures/late opening/early closing incidents are continuing to happen, unavoidably, within the community pharmacy sector. Contractors unable to find a pharmacist to staff a pharmacy may still **seek** to use emergency provisions introduced at the start of the pandemic to reduce temporarily the number of hours or days that they are open. But NHSE&I must agree any contractor application to use the emergency provisions, even if this is done retrospectively. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/changing-pharmacy-opening-hours-in-response-to-workforce-pressures-during-the-ongoing-pandemic/**

**GPhC statement on compulsory COVID-19 vaccination for NHS staff**

The Government has [**announced**](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-introduce-covid-19-vaccination-as-a-condition-of-deployment-for-all-frontline-health-and-social-care-workers) that frontline NHS staff will be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19. This will apply across the CQC regulated health and care sector and is expected to come into force from April 2022. This does not apply to people working in community pharmacies regulated by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/gphc-statement-on-compulsory-covid-19-vaccination-for-nhs-staff/**

**Primary Care Minister receives flu jab at community pharmacy**

The recently appointed Pharmacy Minister, Maria Caulfield, has received her NHS flu jab at the S.G. Barai Pharmacy in Sutton, Surrey. During her visit, the Minister was welcomed by pharmacist and independent pharmacy owner Reena Barai, who was keen to talk to her about the operational challenges that pharmacies are currently facing. Reena also explained the complexity of some of the walk-in healthcare consultations that pharmacies are offering and the need for adequate funding for those. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/primary-care-minister-receives-flu-jab-at-community-pharmacy/**

**DHSC consult on original pack dispensing**

DHSC has started a consultation on proposals to allow pharmacists to dispense prescription medicines in their original packaging. The consultation proposes regulatory changes that would give pharmacists the flexibility to dispense (up to 10%) more or less than the prescribed quantity of a medicine, if this means that they can dispense it in the manufacturer’s original packs. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/department-of-health-and-social-care-consult-on-original-pack-dispensing/**

**DHSC responds to the 2016 hub and spoke consultation**

DHSC has published its response to the 2016 consultation on hub and spoke. The response explains why DHSC did not pursue hub and spoke at the time, and paves the way for a new consultation on hub and spoke in 2021 or 2022, which is expected following significant engagement on the issue by DHSC with key stakeholders, including community pharmacy. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/dhsc-responds-to-the-2016-hub-and-spoke-consultation/**

**Over half of all pharmacies benefit from new advance payment timetable**

Over 6,000 community pharmacy contractors who declared their October 2021 FP34C submission figures through the [**Manage Your Service (MYS) portal**](https://psnc.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=86d41ab7fa4c7c2c5d7210782&id=21eec16ba1&e=b3c36abde4) by 5th November will have received earlier advance payments on the 11th November (circa 20 days earlier than the normal advance payment timetable). All contractors who received earlier advance payments should receive a letter from the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) regarding these payments. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/over-half-of-all-pharmacies-benefited-from-new-earlier-advance-payment-timetable-from-november/**

**Further extension to SSP05 for Fluoxetine 10mg tablets**

SSP05 for Fluoxetine 10mg tablets was previously expected to expire on 12 November 2021 but the end date has been further extended to **Friday 11 February 2022. Read more here:** [**https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/further-extension-to-ssp05-for-fluoxetine-10mg-tablets/**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/further-extension-to-ssp05-for-fluoxetine-10mg-tablets/)

**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.