**Key News and Guidance for LPCs**

 *Week ending 19th December*

**Last week’s news stories:**

**COVID boosters: Urgent discussions on pharmacy pressures continue**

Urgent discussions between PSNC and NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) on how to ease the current pressures on pharmacies are ongoing, following the Prime Minister’s announcement of a significant upscaling of the COVID-19 booster campaign. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-boosters-urgent-discussions-on-pharmacy-pressures-continue/**

**Pharmacy Collect: Stock update and anonymous collections**

Contractors are likely to have seen a significant increase in demand for Lateral Flow Devices following the Prime Minister’s address to the nation on Sunday night (December 12th, 2021), and with national media widely reporting problems with ordering home delivery of tests from the NHS website. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/pharmacy-collect-requesting-a-test-kit-without-a-collect-code/**

**Class 2 MHRA medicines recall – Lucentis 10 mg/ml solution**

The Medicines and Health products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has issued a class 2 medicines recall for: **Lucentis 10 mg/ml solution for injection in pre-filled syringe (Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK) batch 21B15I**. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/class-2-medicines-recall-lucentis-10-mg-ml-solution-for-injection-in-pre-filled-syringe-novartis-pharmaceuticals-uk-batch-21b15ia/**

**Medicine Supply Notification**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has issued a medicine supply notification for **Methylprednisolone acetate (Depo-Medrone) 40mg/ml vials and methylprednisolone acetate (Depo Medrone®) with lidocaine 1% 40mg/ml and 80mg/2ml vials. Read more here: https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/medicine-supply-notification-methylprednisolone-acetate-depo-medrone-40mg-ml-vials-and-methylprednisolone-acetate-depo-medrone-with-lidocaine-1-40mg-ml-and-80mg-2ml-vials/**

**Lateral Flow Test availability: Update for pharmacy teams**

PSNC has been in urgent discussions with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) about the availability of NHS Test and Trace Lateral Flow Devices to pharmacies. The UKHSA confirmed on Wednesday 15th of December that **at that time** there was plenty of stock available in the country, and that they had activated contingency measures to support the supply of tests to pharmacies. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/lateral-flow-test-availability-update-for-pharmacy-teams/**

**Contractor update: PQS deadline extension and other measures**

PSNC has reached agreement with NHSE&I and DHSC on several measures to help ease the immediate pressures on community pharmacies. Foremost among these is an extension, in line with last year's arrangements, to the deadline for meeting the requirements of the Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS). Pharmacies will still need to make the PQS declaration during the February window, but as last year, this will be a claim for work to be undertaken and evidenced by 30th June 2022. Further details will be published shortly on the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) website. Contractors are also no longer required to complete the Community Pharmacy Patient Questionnaire (CPPQ), a contractor-chosen clinical audit, nor a national audit (which was intended to be on valproate) for 2021/22. These measures are not all that PSNC asked for from NHSE&I and DHSC, but they are the majority, and we are pleased that NHSE&I and DHSC have committed to keeping the situation under review. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-update-pqs-deadline-extension-and-further-measures/**

**December 2021 Price Concessions – First update**

DHSC has granted the initial list of price concessions for December 2021. PSNC is still working with DHSC to agree further concessionary prices on other drugs reported to be unavailable at the stated December 2021 Drug Tariff price. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/december-2021-price-concessions-1st-update/**

**PSNC submits response to DHSC consultation on OPD**

PSNC has submitted its response to the proposals set out in the Department of Health and Social Care’s consultation on Original Pack Dispensing (OPD) and supply of medicines containing sodium valproate. The response indicates that PSNC broadly supports appropriate changes to the regulations to enable OPD, as anticipated in the Five-Year Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) deal, and includes several comments and observations, such as the proposed 10% discretion may be insufficient to allow community pharmacies to make full use of OPD. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/psnc-submits-response-to-dhsc-consultation-on-opd/**

**SSP for Salazopyrin 500mg EN-TABS extended**

The Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) for **Salazopyrin 500mg EN-Tabs, SSP014**, has been extended until **Friday 14th January 2022**. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/new-ssp-issued-for-salazopyrin-en-tabs-500mg/**

**LFD stock availability and out of stock poster**

On Friday 17th of December, UKHSA again briefed PSNC on the latest situation regarding the availability of NHS Test and Trace Lateral Flow Devices to pharmacies, and informed PSNC that they had issued a poster for pharmacies to print off and display when they run out of stock of test kits. Read more here: [**https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/pharmacy-collect-stock-update-and-out-of-stock-poster/**](https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/pharmacy-collect-stock-update-and-out-of-stock-poster/)

**PSNC presses for COVID booster role**

PSNC has reiterated its desire to see more pharmacies approved as COVID vaccination centres in discussions with NHSE&I and the national media. In these conversations, we have made clear that pharmacies are the logical place to deliver boosters if these are to become business as usual. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/psnc-presses-for-covid-booster-role-and-lft-resolution/**

**Contractors advised to ensure sufficient stock of Upjohn products to cover demand until end of December**

Due to a change in the distribution model of Upjohn UK Limited (“Upjohn”) products community pharmacy teams are being advised to ensure they have stock levels of Upjohn UK Limited products to cover any demand until the end of December 2021. Read more here: **https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractors-advised-to-ensure-sufficient-stock-levels-of-upjohn-uk-limited-products-to-cover-any-demand-until-the-end-of-december-2021/**

**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.