



# COVID-19 Update

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020

This daily update contains important information for community pharmacy teams about the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## In today's update: NHS Test and Trace; update on quota issues; PSNC resources on COVID-19.

### NHS Test and Trace: Update for community pharmacy

Community pharmacy contractors may have seen the HM Government [announcement](#) that the NHS Test and Trace Service would commence on the 28th May ([see also PSNC's update on this](#)).

Since then, we know that a number of pharmacy teams across England have already been asked to self-isolate in accordance with the service. This has emphasised the need for contractors to consider the implications of the Test and Trace Service and the mitigations in the pharmacy which may avoid the need for whole pharmacy teams to self-isolate if one member tests positive for COVID-19.

Further information on the NHS Test and Trace Service for pharmacies, including some initial advice on patient and staff contacts, is set out on the [PSNC website](#).

#### Guidance for pharmacies

PSNC is continuing to urgently seek guidance from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on whether the Government advice on the [management of staff and exposed patients or residents in health and social care settings](#) applies to community pharmacy and on whether pharmacy team members asked to self-isolate for 14 days with no symptoms will be eligible for a coronavirus test – so that if they test negative, they could return to work earlier.

Alongside seeking these clarifications, PSNC will also be having urgent discussions with DHSC about financial support for pharmacies that have to close temporarily if the whole pharmacy team has had to self-isolate.

#### PSNC Director of Operations Gordon Hockey said:

"The potential implications of the NHS Test and Trace Service for pharmacies are significant, and we are working with DHSC and NHS officials pressing for urgent clarity on these matters. As soon as we have answers we will share them with LPCs and contractors."

## Reporting quota issues: update

Following the launch of the online quota issues reporting form earlier this week, PSNC has received an incredible response from contractors. Within 48 hours, PSNC received over 50 reports of issues obtaining stock due to quota restrictions in place by wholesalers and/or manufacturers, from nearly 30 different contractors. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the form - your reports are invaluable in providing evidence of the pressures that supply chain problems are placing on the sector.

PSNC has already been working to tackle quotas head on through meetings with the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI), the Healthcare Distribution Association (HDA) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to set out the issues community pharmacies are experiencing. We are all aware that there has been unprecedented demand for medicines in recent months and DHSC has been closely monitoring the situation and addressing issues where possible.

Whilst PSNC may not be in a position to respond to and resolve every individual quota issue reported to us, we use all contractor reports in our representations to evidence the range of issues affecting pharmacies and their patients as part of the wider discussions with DHSC, HDA and ABPI on drug quota allocations. So please continue to alert us to quota restrictions via our [reporting form](#).

## PSNC COVID-19 resources

Contractors and their teams are reminded of the wide array of information, guidance and resources available in our [COVID-19 hub](#).

From Government guidance and public messaging to support for business continuity and the supply of medicines, the hub has numerous resources to assist community pharmacy teams through the pandemic.

Keep checking back as the hub is continually being updated with new details and materials being added on an almost daily basis.

### Have you seen our latest FAQs?

PSNC's COVID-19 hub has an [FAQs page](#) with a large number of answers to queries posed by pharmacy contractors, their teams and LPCs; these are being updated on an almost daily basis. Recent additions include:

**Q. The cash flow uplift is an advance payment which will place financial burden on our pharmacy when it is recovered. What is the PSNC doing to stop our pharmacy being negatively impacted financially by the pandemic?**

PSNC's position is clear that cash advances are not sufficient to cover the rising costs and unprecedented challenges being faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, it was important to secure an increase to cashflow in the immediate term in order to help pharmacies during these crucial months, while talks continue. We are still in ongoing discussions with DHSC and NHSE&I, who recognise the wider issues on COVID-19 related costs and we are urgently seeking long term resolution on this.

**Q. How will PSNC use this experience to negotiate appropriate levels of funding for community pharmacy?**

PSNC recognises that we need to have a full and frank discussion with NHSE&I and DHSC about how the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and community pharmacy's response to it, should inform the future of the sector. The NHS is relying on something that, given the funding and capacity issues we have previously highlighted to Government, should not be taken for granted. Those underlying issues still need to be addressed.

Our first job is to ensure community pharmacies have enough financial support to get us through COVID-19, and then we can turn to a full review of the Contractual Framework. We hope the huge amount of work we have done with officials this month will make future negotiations and decisions easier to navigate, but we absolutely recognise that there is more to do to persuade the NHS of pharmacy's importance and value.

**[Find answers to more of your questions here](#)**

**Keep up-to-date with our hub page: [psnc.org.uk/coronavirus](https://psnc.org.uk/coronavirus)**

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