



# COVID-19 Update

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

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

## **In today's update: PSNC negotiations, end-of-month submission, on-demand NHSE&I webinar, Health Secretary contracts coronavirus**

### **PSNC Negotiations Update**

PSNC has today published a list of the possible action points that we are in urgent negotiations with the NHS and Government about to ensure that community pharmacy teams are fully supported in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These include discussions on an urgent funding rescue package, recognising the enormous financial pressures on contractors at this time and the need to ensure that the pharmacy network can continue to stay open and serving patients.

The scope of the discussions mean there is a huge amount of work to do and PSNC is working in collaboration with Government and the NHS at pace: some of the things under discussion can be done reasonably quickly, but other things will take longer because they require legislative changes or wider collaboration. We will continue to make announcements to contractors as soon as we can.

Some of the key ongoing discussions are around:

- The national Pandemic Delivery Service;
- Suspension of further pharmacy services;
- An emergency cash injection and funding protection for closed pharmacies;
- The NHS Emergency Supply Service; and
- Protections for staff re-deployment.

We are also holding urgent negotiations on a range of practical issues that need to be addressed from contractual requirements through medicine supply to NHS IT.

#### **Simon Dukes, PSNC Chief Executive, said:**

"In response to the huge amounts of feedback we are receiving from LPCs and worried contractors around COVID-19, we have today published our negotiations action list. The list is not yet agreed policy with Government, but we hope it shows you the scope of the discussions that we are having with DHSC and NHSE&I and gives some reassurance that we are working on all of the matters that you need clarity on. We can't say when decisions on all of these topics will be made, and some will take longer than others, but rest assured that we are continually in contact with our colleagues at DHSC and NHSE&I, including having direct contact with the Minister, and we are pressing the on the need to achieve urgent progress.'

## **End-of-month submission reminder**

PSNC recognises that these are challenging times and has gained agreement from NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) to the suspension of some requirements due by or shortly after 31st March 2020 – i.e. quarterly NMS and MUR returns and annual complaints reports. However, no such change has yet been made for end-of-month submissions; contractors must therefore continue to submit these as normal.

Contractors should submit their end of month bundle and FP34C using their usual delivery method **no later than the 5th day of the month** following that in which supply was made. However, they may also wish to consider the following advice in light of the current situation:

- With pharmacies seeing an increase in prescription volumes including many coming from displaced patients, please remember to **check and apply the correct exempt or paid status on both EPS and paper prescriptions** before submitting for payment.
- Contractors can **obtain and view PMR system supplier reports** which show total of paper prescriptions dispensed and EPS claims submitted and paper prescriptions dispensed to date.
- Where possible, contractors are urged to **use Manage Your Service (MYS), which can be accessed remotely, to submit their FP34C month-end declarations electronically** and send the paper prescription bundle with a copy of their printed FP34C that reflects their electronic submission.
- If your regular courier service is unavailable, contractors should **make alternative arrangements for delivery of bundles using a secure track and trace method**.

Further guidance on preparing your prescription bundle can be found in **[our prescription submission section](#)**.

If a pharmacy is faced with an emergency (unplanned) closure and does not expect to open during the usual end-of-month submission period, contractors should review the advice on submission in our **[Resilience Guidance – Part 3: Emergency Closure](#)**. However, first and foremost, contractors are advised to contact the NHSBSA to notify them if there is likely to be a delay in bundle submission.

## **NHSE&I webinar now on-demand**

Earlier this week, Ed Waller, Director of Primary Care Strategy and NHS Contracts, and Keith Ridge, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, hosted a COVID-19 preparedness webinar for community pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. Over 1,000 attendees tuned in to hear an update on the work by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) and others to support the sector so far, and a **[recording is now available to watch](#)**.

## **PM and Health Secretary contract COVID-19**

Reacting to news of confirmed COVID-19 cases within the Cabinet, PSNC Chief Executive Simon Dukes said:

"Whilst Health Secretary Matt Hancock has an important role to play in reaching agreement with PSNC on key issues affecting community pharmacy at this time, his contracting of coronavirus and subsequent self-isolation is not expected to inhibit his vital work. External factors such as civil servants' workloads and operational challenges are more of a risk, but we are working with Government to help minimise these where possible.

I would like to thank Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the Health Secretary for their leadership in a time of crisis and wish them both a speedy recovery."

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

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