



COVID-19 Update

Sunday 29th 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: Paper prescriptions; NHS testing and complaints; FAQs; and wellbeing apps.

Paper prescriptions

NHS England and NHS Improvement have received several reports of pharmacy contractors refusing to dispense legally valid paper prescriptions, including those issued by dentists and hospital outpatient departments.

While paper prescriptions are becoming less common as most prescribing in primary care is undertaken using the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS), pharmacy contractors are reminded that they must dispense legally valid paper prescriptions presented for dispensing, including those from healthcare providers who do not have access to EPS, such as dental practices and hospitals.

NHS Testing and Complaints

HM Government and NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have each made announcements of significance for community pharmacy contractors: the Government announced an expanded coronavirus testing service for NHS staff, while NHSE&I confirmed a "pause" of the NHS complaints process.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock has announced a new coronavirus testing programme, in collaboration with industry, for which NHS staff will be first in line.

PSNC has confirmed with HM Government that the new testing programme will be available to community pharmacy – we will make further details available when they are provided. Read the announcement on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, NHSE&I has also this weekend said that it supports a system wide "pause" of the NHS complaints process. This will allow healthcare providers in all sectors to concentrate their efforts on their front-line duties and responsiveness to COVID-19.

NHSE&I said the initial "pause" period is recommended to be for three months with immediate effect. The pause is not being enforced for any healthcare providers who do wish to operate as normal with regard to complaints.

[Read more](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

PSNC has published new FAQs answering questions which have been posed by pharmacy contractors, their teams and Local Pharmaceutical Committees (LPCs).

PSNC is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to address the issues being faced by the community pharmacy sector during the pandemic and we will post new FAQs on a regular basis.

[Read the FAQs.](#)

Free access to wellbeing apps

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have issued information on the first in a series of psychological support for all NHS staff, including those working in primary care, during the COVID-19 outbreak. NHSE&I note the importance of healthcare workers looking after their own health and wellbeing, whilst supporting patients and their family.

The initial offer involves free access to a number of wellbeing apps (Unmind, Headspace, Sleepio and Daylight) from now until the end of December 2020 to support healthcare workers' mental health and wellbeing. Information on how to access this support is available on the [NHS Employers website](#); an NHSmail email account may be required to access some of the apps.

Contractors are also reminded that as supermarkets and others increasingly prioritise NHS staff over other customers, NHS or other forms of identification can become targets for theft and should be kept safe and not on display.

PSNC's COVID-19 resources

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

From Government guidance and information for the public to considerations for opening hours and the supply of medicines, the hub has numerous resources to support community pharmacy teams. The hub will also be updated on a daily basis to incorporate the information provided in these updates.

Keep up-to-date with our hub page: psnc.org.uk/coronavirus

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