



COVID-19 Update

Wednesday 29th April 2020

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

In today's update: PPE availability; police security advice; end of month claims; patient access to volunteers; April edition of CPN; media resource hub

PPE Availability via Wholesalers

The Healthcare Distribution Association (HDA) has, this afternoon, **issued a statement** to inform pharmacy contractors that the stocks of surgical masks the Association's member wholesalers have been able to purchase from the Government's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) stockpile have now almost completely run out. HDA member companies are awaiting a new sale event to be announced by Public Health England, at which time they will be able to obtain further supplies of surgical masks for supply to contractors.

This week, PSNC has been seeking information on the availability of PPE, particularly surgical masks, from the mainline pharmaceutical wholesalers, following reports from contractors that supplies were becoming very difficult to obtain. The HDA statement confirms the extremely low stock levels held by the wholesalers and underlines the need for the Government to arrange for more stock to be made available from the national stockpile.

We are continuing to push DHSC and NHSE&I to address the ongoing shortage of PPE within the community pharmacy sector, both by making more stock available to the wholesalers in the short term and accelerating the introduction of the new e-commerce ordering site for primary, community and social care providers.

[Find out more here, including guidance on other PPE supply options](#)

Crime Prevention Advice for Pharmacies

The Metropolitan Police has issued guidance for community pharmacies offering advice on security of premises, and safety and wellbeing of staff and customers during the pandemic. The publication of this guidance follows requests from national pharmacy organisations for the police to support pharmacy staff on the frontline.

[Security advice for pharmacies during the pandemic \(summary\)](#)

[Security advice for pharmacies during the pandemic](#)

[Key contacts for police services](#)

Pharmacy staff are working in a challenging environment when patient and public fears and frustrations can be heightened, and the National Crime Agency reports soaring prices of illicit drugs as global supply and demand changes and there is concern that this may increase the risks for those working in pharmacies, where medicines are held.

The Met Police advice includes practical steps for contractors to take to avoid problems and includes advice such as: *It is important that you or your staff keep controlled drugs out of the sight of counter areas and do not inadvertently draw attention to additional quantities of drugs on the premises.*

Claim Now for Easter Bank Holiday Opening Payment

There is now less than a week left for community pharmacy contractors to claim payment for being required by NHSE&I to open between 2pm to 5pm on both Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Contractors must submit their claim for the £250 per hour payment using the [Manage Your Service \(MYS\) portal](#) by the **5th May 2020**, with payment due on the 1st June. This payment will not appear on the FP34 Schedule of Payment but NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) will provide confirmation of payment via individual contractor letters.

End of Month Claims Reminder

Contractors are reminded that they 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 [PSNC's end of month submission tips](#) in light of the current situation.

Those contractors who provide the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS), should also note that the NHSBSA has informed PSNC that **around 900 contractors have pending claims for CPCS consultations** within the MYS portal, which were conducted in October and November 2019, but which have yet to be submitted for payment. We urge all contractors to ensure they have no outstanding claims for previous months otherwise the funding will be lost.

Patient Direct Access to NHS Volunteer Responders

Patients that are not currently supported by a volunteer and need some help during the pandemic with shopping, prescription collection or a friendly chat, can now access support from NHS Volunteer Responders without needing a referral from a health professional.

Pharmacy teams can now advise [eligible patients](#) to call **0808 196 3646** (8am to 8pm) to seek volunteer assistance.

PSNC COVID-19 Communications

This month's blog from PSNC Chief Executive Simon Dukes focusses on community pharmacy's role in the COVID-19 response, discussing the pressures that pharmacy teams are under and the financial support needed urgently.

[Read the April 2020 CEO Blog](#)

The April 2020 edition of PSNC's regular Community Pharmacy News (CPN) magazine is now available. This COVID-19 special issue of CPN features:

- Plans put in place to support community pharmacy teams through the pandemic;
- Full details on the Pandemic Delivery Service;
- Protections to safeguard the pharmacy workforce; and
- A guide to COVID-19 related payments.

[Read April's CPN magazine](#)

New Hub to Help Pharmacists Tell Their Stories

The National Pharmacy Association (NPA) and PSNC have jointly created a media resource hub – www.nhsfrontline.com – to make it simpler for pharmacy teams and LPCs to tell their NHS frontline stories, to newspapers and via social media.

[Find out more about the resource hub](#)

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. Can community pharmacies request a list of their nominated patients who are also on the Shielded patient list?

PSNC has discussed with NHSE&I the potential for such lists of patients to be provided to pharmacy contractors, but it has been determined that the lists would rapidly become out of date, so it is best that where a patient states they have been asked to shield themselves, this is checked via their SCR. The fluidity of the list of Shielded patients is occurring as a result of changes that GPs and hospital consultants are making to the list and ongoing changes in the clinical condition of individuals. During the pandemic, there has also been an increase in patients changing their EPS nominations, so that would further impact on the accuracy of any patient lists provided to pharmacies.

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

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

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