



COVID-19 Update

Monday 11th May 2020

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

In today's update: Drug Tariff adjustments; 25th May Bank Holiday opening; NHSE&I webinar now on-demand; update on use of rapid tests in pharmacies; COVID-19 impact survey

May Drug Tariff Updates: £300 for staff protection and COA/COC requirements

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has made some retrospective adjustments to the May 2020 Drug Tariff to incorporate some new arrangements in light of the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Firstly, a change to Part VIA confirms a £300 payment from NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) to help community pharmacy contractors adapt their premises to keep their staff and the public safe. As stated in Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Keith Ridge's [preparedness letter for community pharmacy on 31st March](#), the money is intended to be a contribution towards the installation of physical barriers and other measures to help encourage social distancing. As distance-selling pharmacies don't provide Essential services face-to-face, they are excluded from this payment.

The majority of contractors will have received this payment on 1st May 2020. Whilst it was not itemised on the FP34 Schedule of Payments, the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) has sent letters to contractors confirming the payment. Any contractors who have temporarily closed their pharmacy for more than two weeks since 31st March 2020 but made adjustments for social distancing prior to or shortly after the closure, will need to claim the £300 payment by 5th August 2020 using [the appropriate NHSBSA claim form](#).

PSNC welcomes the £300 contribution and is continuing to press NHSE&I to fully recognise the costs of introducing these important protective measures for pharmacy staff and patients.

Secondly, there is no longer a requirement for contractors to submit copies of the Certificate of Analysis (COA) or Certificate of Conformity (COC) to the local NHSE&I team of the prescriber after dispensing unlicensed specials or imports not listed in Part VIII.B. As contractors are still required to keep the necessary records of unlicensed specials or imports they dispense, any COAs and COCs obtained can be retained by the pharmacy instead for a period of five years.

Contractor Update: 25th May Bank Holiday Opening

During last week's COVID-19 Community Pharmacy Webinar, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) stated that they are hoping to revert to standard locally determined opening arrangements for the Spring Bank Holiday on 25th May 2020.

However, it was suggested that NHSE&I would need sufficient data about those community pharmacies that are already planning to open to be able to determine whether there will be sufficient provision on that day. Contractors are therefore strongly encouraged to tell their local NHSE&I team if their premises will be open on the 25th May bank holiday.

NHSE&I webinar on-demand

Last week NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) held their latest COVID-19 webinar for community pharmacy teams, and a [recording is now available to watch on the FuturesNHS Collaboration Platform](#) (login required but free to register).

Update on the use of rapid tests in community pharmacies

Public Health England (PHE) has updated its guidance on the use of rapid point of care tests in community pharmacies to make it clear that these tests are different from the [postal kits being used whereby a swab is taken at home and returned by post or courier](#).

Contractors are reminded that while some manufacturers are selling products for the diagnosis of COVID-19 in community settings, such as pharmacies, the current view by PHE is that the use of these products is not advised.

[Read more here](#)

COVID-19 impact survey

Researchers from the Universities of Huddersfield and Leeds are running a survey to assess the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the practices and wellbeing of community pharmacists. Expected to take around 10 minutes to complete, community pharmacists from across England are invited to share their experiences anonymously by 10th June 2020.

[Click here to complete the survey](#)

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. How do I access volunteers locally?

Volunteers may have been organised by local councils or voluntary bodies; your LPC may be able to advise on the availability of local volunteer schemes. Local volunteers may also be available via the NHS Volunteer Responders programme. Read more about volunteers in section 9 of our [guidance on the Pandemic Delivery Service](#).

Q. What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should pharmacy teams be using?

Public Health England's (PHE) updated [guidance on the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#), published on 2nd April 2020, now recommends use of fluid-resistant surgical masks in pharmacies when working in an area with possible or confirmed cases and where staff are unable to maintain 2 metres social distance from the patient. The guidance for community pharmacy staff is included in Table 3 of the guidance – Recommended PPE for ambulance, paramedics, first responders and pharmacists.

[Read the RPS guidance on use of PPE in pharmacies](#)

The updated guidance reflects the fact that coronavirus is now widespread in the community, meaning clinicians are more likely to see patients with the virus, some of whom may have minimal or no symptoms. Despite advice to patients with COVID-19 symptoms that they should stay away from pharmacies, some people are not following that guidance and pharmacy team members are potentially being exposed to possible or confirmed cases.

It is important to note that while pharmacy staff may now choose to wear masks in line with the revised guidance, it is imperative that social distancing and self-isolation (where appropriate) continue to be practised and hygiene measures, such as regular hand washing, continue to be followed.

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

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

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee



Linked in

twitter

facebook

14 Hosier Lane, London, EC1A 9LQ
Tel: 0203 1220 810 | Email: info@psnc.org.uk