



COVID-19 Update

Tuesday 12th 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: Extension of death in service benefits to pharmacy teams; resources for MP engagement; and weekly news updates

Extension of death in service benefits to pharmacy teams

Matt Hancock, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, has confirmed that the death in service benefit for frontline healthcare workers has been extended to pharmacy teams, as well as pharmacists.

Writing to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Mr Hancock confirmed that the Life Assurance Scheme now includes registered pharmacy technicians, dispensing assistants and medicine counter assistants.

The scheme was announced last month and was introduced to provide some financial protection for the families of those healthcare workers who die due to their exposure to COVID-19. But although Mr Hancock had said that community pharmacists would be included in the scheme, concerns were raised about the inclusion of wider members of the pharmacy team.

PSNC Chief Executive Simon Dukes said:

"PSNC is pleased that the Secretary of State has confirmed that wider pharmacy team members will be included in the death in service scheme and that they are recognised as a key part of the NHS family. Community pharmacy teams are working hard on the frontline of the NHS during a critical time and it is only right that the whole team should be recognised in this way."

MP engagement

In recent weeks, PSNC and the other national pharmacy organisations have been briefing MPs at a national level to build support for the sector. Today the chief executives of the national pharmacy organisations held a Zoom briefing with 8 MPs and Peers to explain some of the challenges the sector has faced amid the COVID-19 outbreak and set out what further government action is required.

LPCs and contractors have also reported increasing queries from MPs about the pharmacy response to COVID-19, with many offering to help by asking how they can support the sector in Parliament. For those looking to lobby their MPs at a local level, PSNC has developed a template letter for MPs and a key messages document which sets out some of our national policy asks. Both of these are available on our COVID-19 page for **[promoting pharmacy to others](#)**.

If you would be willing to share any communications you have had – especially responses from MPs or where they have written letters to the Minister – please forward them to commsteam@psnc.org.uk.

Weekly news updates

As we are all working through a fast-moving situation with new information and guidance being published on a daily basis, to help contractors and LPCs keep track of things, alongside these daily updates we are also publishing weekly news round-ups. These are published every Monday and include all the key news and guidance from the previous week and are [available here](#).

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 can community pharmacy contractors help to support and amplify PSNC's voice?

The pharmacy bodies are uniting around the brand #pharmacyheroes and are encouraging contractors and LPCs to join us in using this hashtag to promote the great work being undertaken by pharmacy teams. Further information on this joint work is available via the PSNC website where there are some [template tweets](#) and [graphics](#) available to use, which can be personalised to apply to your local area/LPC. You can also find out more about submitting case studies via the joint hub: www.nhsfrontline.com

Q. Pharmacy's role is still not being recognised by the Government, so why is PSNC not being more vocal in the media to gain support for the sector?

PSNC has been giving clear messages – to officials, politicians and in the media – about the pressure that pharmacies are under and we are in active negotiations for additional funding (additional to the contract sum). In regards to the media, we have working with the other national pharmacy organisations on this and you can see some of the recent pharmacy stories on the [Promoting pharmacy's role section](#) of our COVID-19 hub.

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

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

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