



COVID-19 Update

Thursday 21st 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: pharmacy staff wellbeing campaign; full details of death in service benefits scheme; NHSE&I webinar on-demand.

Pharmacist Support launches wellbeing campaign

A new campaign to help pharmacists and pharmacy students to prioritise their wellbeing has been launched by **Pharmacist Support**, the profession's independent charity.

The COVID-19 outbreak has presented an uncertain and unprecedented situation for the sector, putting pressure on all community pharmacy teams. It can be difficult for pharmacy staff to find time to prioritise their own needs so the ACTNow campaign aims to raise awareness of the importance of wellbeing.

The campaign encourages community pharmacy teams to:

- A**llow time for wellbeing
- C**onsider needs of your colleagues
- T**ake action

As part of the campaign, Pharmacist Support has developed a central resource hub, named the Wardley Wellbeing Hub (wellbeinghub.pharmacistsupport.org), where you can take ACTION to manage those every day pressures and worries.

PSNC is supporting this campaign and encourages all pharmacy staff to take some time to take care of themselves if they can.

PSNC Chief Executive Simon Dukes commented:

"Now more than ever, health professionals need to be able to talk about mental health and wellbeing. In the midst of a global pandemic all NHS service providers are under unprecedented pressure, and no sector more so than those working every day on the front line in community pharmacy.

PSNC is pleased to support this campaign to raise awareness of the importance of pharmacy teams looking after their own wellbeing. Pharmacists and their teams are going above and beyond to care for their patients, and we hope this campaign will also help them to think about their own health."

Claims process for death in service benefits scheme

Full details of the Government's life assurance scheme for frontline healthcare workers have now been released. The scheme will make a payment of £60,000 to the estate of eligible individuals who die from COVID-19 contracted during their frontline essential work.

The newly released information states the scheme will remain open until the relevant NHS workforce provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 expire and that deaths which occurred before the announcement of the scheme will be considered. It also confirms that the scheme is non-contributory, which means there is no cost to staff or employers. Separate guidance for employers outlines their particular responsibilities regarding the scheme, such as making employees aware of it.

The [Secretary of State's letter of 7th May 2020 to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society \(RPS\)](#) details that it is the Secretary of State's intention to exercise his discretion to include relevant members of the pharmacy workforce that meet the scheme's eligibility criteria. The letter should be referenced in any claim. In order to make a payment, the Secretary of State must be satisfied that on the basis of evidence the individual was exposed to a high risk of contracting coronavirus in circumstances where they could not reasonably avoid that risk by the nature and location of the work they carried out.

Full scheme details for both claimants and employers can be found on the [NHS Business Services Authority \(NHSBSA\) website](#).

NHSE&I webinar on-demand

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

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 is PSNC addressing contractors' workload pressures?

The [revised community pharmacy SOP](#) (updated 22nd March 2020) provides contractors with some much-needed flexibility in the hours in which they need to open to the public. This should make it easier for pharmacies to stay open to the public, and help to ensure that staff can work safely and are not fatigued by the current high workload and pressures associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. Pharmacy contractors are encouraged to make use of the provisions to support their staff. Further guidance from PSNC, CCA, NPA and AIM on how to implement this new SOP is available on the [COVID-19 Network Resilience page](#).

Q. Are pharmacy staff eligible for testing, and if so, how is this accessed?

Yes, frontline workers, including community pharmacy staff in England, can access free testing for COVID-19, via the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) national testing service. Testing will allow those currently unable to return to work because they or a member of their family or household have symptoms of coronavirus to know whether they do have the virus.

A new portal for booking COVID-19 tests for key workers, including community pharmacy team members, is now available for use by team members and employers: [Essential workers: apply for a coronavirus test \(GOV.UK\)](#)

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

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

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