



COVID-19 Update

Friday 5th June 2020

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

In today's update: antibody testing programme; PPE update; changes to eRD consent.

Antibody testing programme

As you may already be aware, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) is in the process of rolling out a COVID-19 antibody testing programme. Antibody testing will be open to NHS staff, including community pharmacy teams, with each NHS region managing its own arrangements. Further information will be made available in due course.

[Read NHSE&I's letter about the antibody testing programme](#)

It is, however, important to note that the **[NHS Test and Trace guidance for healthcare workers](#)** states that a positive antibody test result does not exempt someone from the requirement to self-isolate for 14 days if they are a contact of a confirmed case. Antibody testing can only inform about previous exposure and it is currently unknown whether this leads to protection against future COVID-19 infections.

PPE update for community pharmacy

Some pharmacy teams have experienced difficulties in obtaining face masks in recent weeks. However, today's Primary Care Bulletin from NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) reported that there are now adequate stock levels of personal protective equipment (PPE) at pharmacy wholesalers once again. Using this established medical supply route already available to pharmacy should keep things simpler for contractors.

If PPE cannot be accessed via this route and contractors are close to running out, they can contact their Local Resilience Forum (LRF) for stock or, if they cannot help, phone the National Supply Distribution Response (NSDR) on 0800 915 9964 for an urgent delivery.

NHSE&I is currently developing a new online system so that pharmacies can report any problems they are having accessing PPE, and this will support future allocations.

Temporary changes to eRD consent model

Patient consent requirements for electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD) have been temporarily suspended to encourage wider use of the system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have [written to community pharmacies and GP practices](#) to explain the changes to the consent model for eRD and to highlight this opportunity for eRD to be further utilised to benefit more patients.

These changes are currently due to remain in place until 30th June 2020, at which point they will be reviewed.

PSNC encourages pharmacy teams and LPCs to support their GP practice colleagues with helping patients to benefit from the advantages of eRD use.

[See NHSE&I advice for GP practices and eRD resources](#)

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. I would like to stock COVID-19 test kits in my pharmacy; am I allowed to do this?

The Government has advised that it is illegal to supply COVID-19 home tests in the UK because none have so far received a CE mark. [Read further information from the MHRA.](#)

Q. What should I do if members of the public present at the pharmacy with symptoms of COVID-19?

People should only be visiting pharmacies to seek healthcare advice and to collect medicines for themselves or on behalf of vulnerable or self-isolating patients. Anyone who presents with symptoms of COVID-19 should be asked to leave immediately. If they need advice on how to manage the condition, they should be advised to visit NHS 111 online (via 111.nhs.uk) or, if that is not possible, they can call NHS 111.

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

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