



# COVID-19 Update

Monday 15th 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: PSNC advice on use of facemasks and face coverings in community pharmacies.

### Facemasks and face coverings

Since the start of the outbreak, community pharmacy contractors have been taking steps to ensure their pharmacies are COVID-secure for patients, the public and staff, and have been adopting a variety of measures including, as appropriate, the use of facemasks.

There is clear advice for pharmacy staff to wear a Type IIR facemask for patient interactions – [see here](#) – but the advice for staff to staff interactions is less clear. The official Public Health England (PHE) advice is for pharmacy staff to follow [advice for 'shops and branches' and other retail outlets](#). However, the use of facemasks in pharmacy is complicated by the way in which pharmacy staff routinely move from patient interactions (a patient facing role) on the medicines counter to non-patient interactions, working in the dispensary. In such cases it may be important for sessional use of Type IIR facemasks to be used by these staff.

Last week in a letter to primary care contractors, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) referenced [new guidance for the hospital sector](#) and indicated that new primary care guidance would be issued. Until such guidance is issued, community pharmacy contractors are asked to consider whether to follow the guidance issued to hospital staff in non-clinical situations, as well as the advice for visitors to wear face coverings, as follows:

Interaction	Circumstances	Facemask/face covering
Staff interactions with patients	<i>Working in an area with possible or confirmed case(s) and unable to maintain 2 metres social distance</i> should wear a surgical facemask – fluid resistant (Type IIR) surgical facemask – for sessional use. One session could be a half day period of time on the medicines counter.	Sessional use of facemasks (Type IIR) – personal protective equipment (PPE)  <a href="#">(full guidance here)</a>
Staff to staff working (e.g.	In all settings that are unable to be delivered as COVID-secure,	*The recommendation is for a Type I or Type II facemask worn to

staff working in the dispensary)	all staff (both in clinical and non-clinical roles), when not otherwise required to use personal protective equipment (PPE), should wear a facemask; worn to prevent the spread of infection from the wearer*	prevent the spread of infection from the wearer. If Type IIR facemasks are more readily available, and there are no local supply issues for their use as personal protective equipment, then these can be used as an alternative to Type I or Type II masks.  ( <a href="#">full guidance here</a> )
Patient/public in the pharmacy	Patients and the public should be encouraged to wear a form of face covering, to prevent the spread of infection from the wearer.	Face covering  ( <a href="#">see PSNC poster here</a> )

Visors also offer protection against COVID-19 infection or transmission.

The use of facemasks is part of an assessment by contractors to ensure pharmacies are COVID-secure for patients, the public and staff, which is important for their safety and as part of a contractor's health and safety and Terms of Service responsibilities. Other measures include, as appropriate, but are not limited to, handwashing, physical screens, revised working practices, split teams, and any revised lunch and break arrangements; assessments for individual staff members are also important.

### Further guidance

- See our earlier news article [NHS Test and Trace: Update for community pharmacy](#)
- View PSNC's Social Distancing and Infection Control Risk Assessment Template on our [PPE, staff safety and security webpage](#)
- Read the [RPS guidance on use of PPE in pharmacies](#)

Have you seen our latest COVID-19 related 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. What does PSNC advise that pharmacy teams do during the pandemic?

Guidance for pharmacies has been published by NHSE&I but the situation is evolving rapidly and guidance is therefore being updated on a very regular basis. Our general guidance is that pharmacy contractors and their teams:

1. Read the [NHSE&I guidance](#) whenever it is updated and implement its recommended actions;
2. Clearly display the COVID-19 posters at points of entry to your pharmacy;
3. Complete a risk review for your pharmacy and put steps in place to mitigate any risks identified;
4. Implement your [business continuity plan](#) where required and seek assistance and advice from your [Local Pharmaceutical Committee](#);

5. Keep up to date with developments by regularly checking the information on [COVID-19 on GOV.UK](#), the [NHSE&I Coronavirus Primary Care webpage](#) and checking your NHSmail shared mailbox on a regular basis for updates from NHSE&I; and
6. Where possible, display the public health advice posters on hand washing, social distancing etc.

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

Keep up-to-date with our hub page: [psnc.org.uk/coronavirus](https://psnc.org.uk/coronavirus)

*Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee*



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