



# Daily Update

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020

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

## In today's update: Government announces COVID-19 plan for winter; latest COVID-19 updates for pharmacy; guidance on prescription signature suspension.

### Government's COVID-19 Winter Plan

Ahead of a televised address to the nation tonight, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has given a statement to Parliament and published the Government's [COVID-19 Winter Plan](#), alongside a [summary](#) of the plan.

The Government plan describes changes from national to local management of the outbreak and outlines ambitions for the Christmas period. There is a clear recognition that moving forwards will be greatly assisted by:

- Securing access to more than 350 million doses of vaccine from seven different vaccine developers;
- Making preparations for a UK-wide vaccination programme to be ready next month;
- Strengthening the community testing programme;
- Regularly testing NHS front-line staff, as well as staff in social care and other high-risk critical settings; and
- Maintaining the right behaviours (i.e. following the public health advice previously given on washing hands, wear a face covering, social distancing, etc).

### Latest COVID-19 updates for community pharmacy

#### **COVID-19 Cost Negotiations**

Earlier this month PSNC restated its position that community pharmacy contractors must be compensated for the full impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their businesses. Amidst reports that the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) had made a proposal to PSNC, we confirmed that an initial funding offer had been rejected as we cannot accept any less than full reimbursement for pharmacies of their COVID-related costs.

Since then, PSNC has put a counter-proposal to DHSC, asking for the £370m in advance payments to be written off against the costs of COVID-19 to contractors for a particular period of time. We await a response to that proposal.

[Read more, including a statement from PSNC CEO Simon Dukes](#)

## **COVID-19 Vaccinations**

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) has clearly indicated that it expects community pharmacy to have a role in the COVID-19 vaccination programme, but contractors should be aware that – due to the complexity surrounding its unprecedented mass rollout and the storage requirements for the Pfizer vaccine – their involvement will be very different from any involvement they have in other vaccination programmes.

Contractors can also be assured that PSNC has stressed that community pharmacy teams must be vaccinated alongside all other health and social care professionals: NHSE&I has now confirmed to us that this will be the case.

## **[Read more on our new COVID-19 vaccinations webpage](#)**

## **Asymptomatic Testing for COVID-19**

So far, there has been no announcement or letter about routine asymptomatic COVID-19 testing for community pharmacy staff. PSNC is pressing for this to be available to all pharmacy staff, seeking a consistent approach to healthcare settings, and NHSE&I have confirmed work is ongoing in relation to pharmacies. Further information on access to asymptomatic testing will be made available in due course.

## **Guidance on suspension of signatures on prescription forms**

Contractors are reminded that PSNC has published updated guidance on the dispensing and end of month submission process following the **temporary suspension** of the requirement for patients (or their representatives) to sign the back of NHS prescription forms or EPS tokens.

The **PSNC guidance** includes important reminders for pharmacy staff on the correct completion of exempt or paid declarations on the reverse of prescription forms and EPS tokens, and highlights the key changes to be aware of for dispensing and the end of month submission process.

## **[Learn more and download the PSNC guidance](#)**

Have you seen our latest FAQs?

PSNC's website has a large number of answers to queries posed by pharmacy contractors, their teams and LPCs; these are updated on a regular basis. Recent additions include:

### **Q. Are all the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) prescription processing sites open as usual to receive end of month bundles?**

All NHSBSA prescription processing division offices will be staying open so bundles should continue to be posted via secure track and trace method to the normal delivery addresses no later than the 5th day of the month following that in which the supply was made.

It would be prudent to check in advance with your regular courier if there are any planned changes to collection/delivery timings for your end of month bundle. If your regular courier service is unavailable, contractors should make alternative arrangements for delivery of bundles using a secure track and trace delivery method.

**Keep up-to-date on COVID-19 with our hub page: [psnc.org.uk/coronavirus](https://psnc.org.uk/coronavirus)**

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