

NHS England and NHS Improvement South East: New coronavirus (COVID-19) SOP re: Working arrangements.

Dear Pharmacy Colleagues,

Thank you for your continued working during these unprecedented times.

Following the publication of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) standard operating procedure (SOP) for community pharmacy (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/standard-operating-procedure-community-pharmacy/>), please see the information below providing details of the processes to follow in the South East Region for sections 5.1 and 5.2.

Pharmacies must be open to the public for all their contracted opening hours.

Section 5.1: working behind closed doors

At times of extreme pressure pharmacies may work behind closed doors as long as this has been agreed in advance with NHS England and NHS Improvement regional team. The SOP goes on to state;

- Where a pharmacy needs to work behind doors closed to the public it can do so for up to 2.5 hours a day.
- On days where they are expected to be open, all pharmacies will be expected to have their doors open to the public between 10am and 12 noon and 2pm and 4pm. The 'working behind closed doors hours' must therefore be before 10am, between midday and 2pm or after 4pm.
- 100-hour pharmacies needing to work behind closed doors due to extreme pressure will be expected to have their doors open from 10am to 12 noon and 2pm to 6pm. The 'working behind closed doors hours' must therefore be before 10am, between midday and 2pm or after 6pm.

If your pharmacy is experiencing extreme pressure and needs to apply to work from behind closed doors, please complete the form following the link below. Please note this link is only for pharmacies located within the South East

Region. <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=kp4VA8ZyI0umSq9Q55Ctv23DAIvaZe1MqXLdG7XpxmxUNjFSWTUwMkxONzJCWDAzSkUyVVcyRUJSRC4u>

Section 5.2: Regulatory amendments during the pandemic

Regulatory provisions have been put in place to enable contractors to make temporary adjustments as an emergency measure, where necessary, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. These include the following:

- If a pharmacy cannot open (e.g. due to the unavailability of a responsible pharmacist or enough staff to open safely), then they must inform the NHS England and NHS Improvement regional team, who will help the pharmacy ensure provisions are in place for patients to access alternative pharmaceutical services. The pharmacy must use all reasonable endeavours to resume provision of pharmaceutical services as soon as is practicable. Please complete the standard unplanned closure form (annex

14): <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/pharmacy-manual-chapter-36-annexes/> and email it to England.southeastcommunitypharmacy@nhs.net

- If a pharmacy is unable to reopen, it can apply to NHS England and NHS Improvement for a temporary closure. This also applies to other COVID-19 related circumstances, e.g. where there is a significant reduction in demand for pharmaceutical services in locations such as airports and shopping malls. This emergency provision will require the contractor to give 24 hours' notice and the reasons for the temporary closure. Please complete this form: <https://www.pcc-cic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Temporary-closures-application-form-Sept-2020-v1.pdf> and return it to England.southeastcommunitypharmacy@nhs.net
- Pharmacies may apply to NHS England and NHS Improvement for a temporary change to the days or times they are obliged to provide pharmaceutical services at their pharmacy premises. Again, this emergency provision will require the contractor to give 24 hours' notice and the reasons for the temporary closure. Please complete this form: <https://www.pcc-cic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Temporary-opening-hours-application-form-Sept-2020-v1.pdf> and return it to England.southeastcommunitypharmacy@nhs.net

Please note that for both temporary closures and temporary changes to opening hours, NHS England and NHS Improvement do not need to approve the application in advance. However, should NHS England and NHS Improvement decide to refuse such an application, the pharmacy will need to revert to its opening hours from the date that the pharmacy receives the decision. Pharmacies are therefore advised to seek approval from the relevant NHS England and NHS Improvement regional team before enacting this type of change.

Once again, thank you for your ongoing work ensuring that pharmaceutical services continue to be delivered. Please do not hesitate to contact the team if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

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