



Daily Update

Monday 17th August 2020

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

In today's update: Hancock thanks NHS workers; revised COVID-19 SOP for delivery of pharmacy services; issuing of Steroid Emergency Cards.

Matt Hancock thanks NHS workforce

The Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, has praised the dedication of those who work for the NHS, whilst calling for evidence on reducing bureaucracy in the health and social care system.

Mr Hancock [set out what he has learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic](#) and invited views from healthcare workers through an [open consultation](#). The evidence gathered will be used to identify common bureaucratic burdens and make changes where appropriate.

Recently updated COVID-19 SOP for community pharmacy

On 11th August 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) issued an updated Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for community pharmacies in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The updated SOP is a key source of information and guidance for contractors and consolidates information and guidance already available, as well as providing new advice. New advice or changes include:

Opening hours: The flexible opening provision, which allowed pharmacies to work for up to 2.5 hours a day with their doors closed to the public, has been removed and is no longer available. However, the emergency regulations for use during the pandemic remain available to contractors.

Use of PPE and face coverings: Recently introduced [guidance on personal protective equipment \(PPE\) for primary and community health care providers](#) remains applicable and the recommendation is for a Type I or Type II face mask to be worn. It is also now mandatory for the public to wear face coverings in shops, including community pharmacies.

Shielded patients: Going forwards, clinically extremely vulnerable patients in local outbreak areas will be advised on the need to shield and NHSE&I will inform community pharmacies of the areas where shielding patients are eligible for the pandemic delivery service via [letters published on their website](#).

Management of returned medicines: The disposal of unwanted medicines has not been suspended as the risk of viral transmission from returned medicines is very low.

Indemnity/liability of volunteers: RVS holds public liability insurance which includes the activities of NHS volunteer responders who deliver medicines. However, contractors are advised to ensure that their own indemnity arrangements cover other volunteers (e.g. local self-organised groups).

[Learn more and read the SOP in full](#)

Patient safety alert: Steroid Emergency Card

A **National Patient Safety Alert** has been issued by NHS England and NHS Improvement's national patient safety team regarding the issuing of a Steroid Emergency Card.

Recently published national guidance promotes the issuing of a new patient-held Steroid Emergency Card to help healthcare staff identify patients with adrenal insufficiency and provide information on emergency treatment if the patient is acutely ill, experiences trauma, surgery or other major stressors.

Community pharmacies are asked to hold copies of the Steroid Emergency Card in stock to provide to patients if they lose or misplace their original cards. The card is available to order from Primary Care Support England ([PCSE online](#)).

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 a regular basis. Recent additions include:

Q. Can I still claim payment for medicine deliveries to shielded patients?

With shielding requirements being lifted by the government, the pandemic delivery service is now only available for those in local outbreak areas specified by NHSE&I.

PSNC has therefore agreed with NHSE&I that contractors located in the specified local outbreak areas will continue to receive the Essential service payment, but this payment will cease, as previously planned, for all other contractors.

If a contractor (excluding Distance Selling Pharmacies), located anywhere in England, is asked to deliver a prescription to a shielded patient living in one of the specified local outbreak areas, this can continue to be done under the terms of the Advanced service and a claim for payment can be made by the 5th of the following month via the Manage Your Service (MYS) platform.

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

Keep up-to-date on COVID-19 with our hub page: psnc.org.uk/coronavirus

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