



# Daily Update

Friday 13<sup>th</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: PSNC rejects initial COVID-19 funding offer; guidance on prescription signature suspension; asymptomatic NHS staff testing for COVID-19.**

## **COVID-19 Cost Negotiations Update: PSNC rejects initial offer and makes counter-proposal**

PSNC has today restated its position that community pharmacy contractors must be compensated for the full impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their businesses.

The sector has so far received £370m in advance payments to help with COVID-related costs. This cash injection has been extremely welcome, but contractors must not now be forced to pay this back as they try to cope with the impact of the second wave of COVID-19 in the UK.

An initial funding offer to deal with the financial impact of COVID-19 on community pharmacy contractors was made to PSNC over the summer. This came from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) who had been working with HM Treasury.

The offer marked the start of very challenging negotiations.

PSNC's Negotiating Team ultimately rejected the offer as being too limited. The Team argued that the sums on offer from HM Government were not sufficient and that contractors must not be asked to provide evidence of historical costs, as had been proposed.

PSNC also believed that the proposed policy was not in line with Ministers' pledges to give the NHS whatever it needs during the pandemic, as it would not have allowed contractors to claim compensation for all the impacts that their businesses have felt.

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

## **Contractor guidance on the suspension of patient signatures on prescription forms**

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 including:

- **Where patients would normally sign the FP10 paper prescription form or EPS token, contractors can act as the patient's representative and sign on their behalf (recommended) or may choose to leave the signature box blank**
- During this period, NHSBSA will **NOT SWITCH** any unsigned paper prescription forms between exempt and chargeable groups, but instead, will process prescriptions according to the group in which they are submitted in. To avoid any inappropriate charge deductions, pharmacy staff should **ensure that FP10 paper prescriptions forms are sorted into their correct charge groups (exempt, paid or paid at old charge rate) for the end of month submission process.**

This guidance applies to any prescriptions dispensed and submitted for payment from November 2020 (for dispatch by the 5th December) until the suspension of signatures requirements is lifted.

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

## Asymptomatic NHS staff testing for COVID-19

The NHS has announced that asymptomatic COVID-19 testing will be made available to all patient-facing NHS staff. This announcement relates to a [letter directed towards NHS trusts](#) and says that with appropriate training, staff will be able to test themselves at home twice a week, with results available before they come into work.

**There has been no announcement or letter about routine COVID-19 testing for community pharmacy staff.** However, NHS England and NHS Improvement have confirmed to PSNC that work is ongoing in relation to other front line staff in primary care, including in pharmacies. PSNC is pressing for asymptomatic testing to be available to all pharmacy staff, seeking a consistent approach to healthcare settings that will minimise staff absence and help maintain continuity of service provision.

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

*Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee*



RSS

LinkedIn

twitter

facebook

14 Hosier Lane, London, EC1A 9LQ  
Tel: 0203 1220 810 | Email: [info@psnc.org.uk](mailto:info@psnc.org.uk)