

COVID-19 Update:

Tuesday 24 March



Dear LPC Colleague,

We know, that without your support for your local communities and patients, essential medicines and advice would not be available where it's needed most. Thank you for all you do, and please be assured, that the NPA, along with other pharmacy bodies, is acting swiftly to ensure support from Government and the NHS is in place.

We know that, without your support your local communities and patients, essential medicines and advice will not be available where it's needed most. Thank you for all you do, and please be assured, the NPA along with other pharmacy bodies are acting swiftly to ensure support from Government and the NHS is in place.

With new rules in force now from the Government for the public to stay home, protect the healthcare workforce and save lives we are beginning to hear from members that patients and customers are understand what they need to do to support the system. We encourage you to use the posters and distancing examples we have shared to help manage this and keep your workforce safe.

What you're coping with each day is exceptional, and we're with you every step of the way with practical, professional and business guidance. We're here, six days a week to answer thousands of calls and emails needing essential information.

In today's update, we share new developments, advice and resources in place to help you to respond to the crisis, including practical implementation in your pharmacy.

Managing your business and finances

Financial measures available to community pharmacy during COVID-19

Following the announcement by the Chancellor for businesses, there are a number of financial measures available to community pharmacy during COVID-19. Here we outline all the support available, eligibility and how to access it so you don't miss out on valuable business support.

[Read more](#)

HMRC Helpline for deferral of payments

HMRC have set up a helpline for businesses concerned about paying PAYE, NIC, VAT and corporation tax due to coronavirus, 0800 0159 559. We understand HMRC are willing to discuss a deferral of tax payments where necessary to support businesses at this time. You will need the VAT registration number / the relevant tax references available when you call.

[Read more here](#)

Common workforce scenarios

Members can access an extensive information hub on COVID-19 from our Employment Law and HR partners Ellis Whittam. It includes key advice and guidance on managing staff issues arising from the pandemic and common scenarios. There is a simple, free registration to access.

[Access hub](#)

New Guidance and Support

Coronavirus Bill: how it affects Community Pharmacy

The government is in the process of enacting emergency legislation to help the UK deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Coronavirus Bill contains wide-ranging provisions which, once enacted, will affect everyone in the country. To assist members, the NPA has prepared a brief overview of the main provisions of the Coronavirus Bill that are most relevant to community pharmacies.

[Read overview](#)

Yellow card scheme

Following the Government's recent announcements, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), like many other organisations, are now working remotely. Therefore, the MHRA are requesting all healthcare professionals to submit reports of suspected side effects to medicines via the electronic Yellow Card Scheme. Here's how you need to submit.

[Read here](#)

UK healthcare deliveries from Alliance

A number of steps have been announced to help manage Alliance's supply network during this challenging period. These temporarily affect returns (order in error), ordering cut off times and picking process, giving priority for POM medicines. The NPA are working closely with Alliance and other wholesalers to support the network whilst ensuring members are not disadvantaged

[Read more](#)

Your questions answered

To help members find answers to common questions on operating in the COVID-19 Pandemic the NPA has put together FAQs which will be updated daily.

[Search by topic](#)

[Stay up to date via our dedicated coronavirus webpage](#)

Access to support webinars from across the sector		
Locate A Locum	Norther Ireland	NHS England
Our Business Partner Locate A Locum are holding a webinar Tonight (24th March) at 7pm which will focus on the critical issues around COVID-19 and how it is impacting workforce pressures. The webinar will cover support and guidance on the current locum environment during COVID-19 and returning ex-Pharmacists and what this will mean for the industry	COVID-19 Echo Network Support of Pharmacies across Northern Ireland - HSCB are inviting all pharmacists to join a zoom call this evening at 7.30pm to provide an update and guidance on the current situation in Northern Ireland. Please join using your computer audio at the link	NHS England and NHS Improvement are providing a webinar for community pharmacies on COVID-19 response being held on Wednesday 25 March from 7-8pm
Register now	Join us tonight	Use link to watch

Recent updates you may have missed

[Opening hours flexibility and closures](#)

[Protecting you and your staff](#)

[Repackaging of POM paracetamol tablets](#)

[Chloroquine to treat or prevent coronavirus](#)

[Claiming key worker status – template letter](#)

[Business continuity Webinar - watch on demand](#)

We're representing Independent Community Pharmacy

Our asks of government

Community pharmacies are in the frontline of the response to Covid-19. We are asking government for, amongst other things;

- Contingency funding for pharmacies that are forced to close temporarily
- Emergency funding to ease cashflow problems in pharmacies
- Proper recognition of the huge effort that is underway in community pharmacy to maintain medicine supply and be the front door to the NHS at a time of great challenge and when so many other services are being put on hold

We are currently working with other pharmacy bodies to coordinate all the detailed requests we have for government at this time.

Keeping independent community pharmacy in the news

Amongst the other key actions the NPA are taking on behalf of independent community pharmacy, we're clear that we need the support of the public and Government. Our press office is working hard to respond to many requests from the media, and to show the daily challenges independent community pharmacy are facing as this crisis deepens.

We continue to seek opportunities to tell the pharmacy story in the media. The National Pharmacy Association has reassured the public that the UK has sufficient medicines to meet need in a series of articles across local and national media today. Sky News, the Evening Standard, the Scotsman and the I newspaper are among media carrying our comments today.

We're here to help

Advice and Support

Call: 01727891800 or email: pharmacyservices@npa.co.uk

NPAI General Claims Team

Call: 0800 4960426

Employment and HR advisory service

Call: 0330 123 0558 or email: employmentadvice@npa.co.uk

Press Office

email: press@npa.co.uk

References and further reading:

- WHO: <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>
- GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-government-announces-moving-out-of-contain-phase-and-into-delay>
- GOV.UK latest information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>
- NHS.UK: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- FCO: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>
- Community Pharmacy in NI: <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3124.htm>
- For Scotland Pharmacy negotiator Community Pharmacy Scotland <https://www.cps.scot/>
- Health Protection Scotland <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/>

The NPA is here for you

These are exceptional times. We are moving our resources and priorities to be able to best support members in every way possible as you face these daily challenges, from resources and guidance, advice through our Pharmacy Services, Claims and Employment and HR Teams, we're here for you. We have plans in place to continue our service to you, if we suffer further restrictions to staff movement, or further reduced staff, as our support to our members is paramount. There may be some delays to non-emergency support and routine tasks, as we move staff to more critical tasks, so please bear with us.

Further details of potential changes in our usual, non-COVID activities can be found [here](#).