



# COVID-19 Update

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

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

## **In today's update: 8th May Bank Holiday; NHSE&I webinar on-demand; scam warning**

### **8th May Bank Holiday Opening**

During last night's COVID-19 Community Pharmacy Webinar it was confirmed by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) that they are considering asking community pharmacies to open on the 8th May Bank Holiday.

Following the requirement for community pharmacies to open on Good Friday and Easter Monday between 2pm and 5pm, contractors are understandably keen to know NHSE&I's plans for 8th May as early as possible.

NHSE&I is once again keen to ensure that the public have appropriate access to pharmaceutical services for the Bank Holiday on Friday 8th May. Ed Waller, NHSE&I Director of Primary Care Strategy and NHS Contracts, told webinar attendees that NHSE&I will "give people more notice, I'm determined, than we managed to last time about opening at Easter" and that current thinking is that "we need more than the number of pharmacies we'd usually have on a bank holiday open".

Discussions between NHSE&I and PSNC about the level of provision needed began almost immediately after Easter, with PSNC pressing for a decision to be made as soon as possible.

We expect that NHSE&I will treat the upcoming 8th May Bank Holiday in the same manner as the Easter Bank Holidays as GP practices will again be open for business as usual. However, PSNC has requested that any clarifications on flexibility – given late for Easter – are set out with the announcement to help contractors and NHSE&I regional teams.

### **PSNC's Director of Operations and Support, Gordon Hockey, said:**

"PSNC is in discussion with NHSE&I about pharmacy provision on the Bank Holidays in May. We are seeking terms similar to those put in place for Easter and have requested that a decision is made as soon as possible because contractors have limited time to make the necessary staffing arrangements."

## NHSE&I Webinar On-demand

Yesterday, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) held their latest COVID-19 preparedness webinar for community pharmacy teams, and a [recording is now available to watch](#) on the FuturesNHS Collaboration Platform (login required but free to register).

The webinar included information on COVID-19 testing by Dr Aidan Fowler, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), as well as the usual updates from NHSE&I.

## Scam Warning

The COVID-19 pandemic has, unfortunately, been seized upon on by fraudsters as an opportunity to exploit people when they are under great stress. Community pharmacy contractors are therefore reminded to be on the guard for scams.

One example PSNC has been alerted to is a fraudulent letter about face masks, purporting to be from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Contractors may find the Met Police's [Little Guide to... preventing fraud and cyber crime](#) series useful in helping to identify scams and advising staff on how to avoid falling victim to them.

Have you seen our latest 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 an almost daily basis. Recent additions include:

### **Q. What should I do if members of the public present at the pharmacy with symptoms of COVID-19?**

Following the Government's lockdown announcement to the nation, people should now only be visiting pharmacies to seek healthcare advice and to collect medicines for themselves or on behalf of vulnerable or self-isolating patients. Anyone who presents with symptoms of COVID-19 should be asked to leave immediately. If they need advice on how to manage the condition, they should be advised to visit NHS 111 online via [111.nhs.uk](#) or, if that's not possible, they can call NHS 111.

### **Q. Are all 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 be posted via secure track and trace method to the normal delivery addresses. Check in advance with your regular courier if there are any planned changes to collection 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.

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

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