

COVID-19 Information for pharmacies – Updated 01/12/21

Humber LPC Office:

All staff members of Humber LPC will be continuing to work remotely; however you can contact us by email on: humber.lpc@nhs.net, or alternatively you can call us on 01482 335824.

You may also be able to find the information you are looking for by searching on our website: <https://communitypharmacyhumber.co.uk/> or searching PSNC website: <http://psnc.org.uk/>

Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread:

Full guidance [can be found here](#).

Shielding advice for the clinically extremely vulnerable to stop from April: [Shielding for CEV patients to stop from 1st April 2021](#)

NHSE&I guidance: Arrangements for primary care from 19th July 2021:

Following the move of England to step 4 of the Government's COVID-19 response on Monday (19th July 2021), NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) issued a letter to all primary care contractors outlining their continuing expectations across primary care in relation to access, infection prevention and control, and continuing contractual arrangements.

For community pharmacy, the expectation is that contractors will fulfil all aspects of their terms of service for 2021/22. [Download a copy of the letter](#)

Updated IPC guidance and face coverings mandatory again in pharmacies 30th November 2021

Following changes to regulations introduced in the wake of the identification of the first UK cases of the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus, the wearing of face coverings in shops, including community pharmacies, is once again mandatory in England from 30th November 2021. [Find out more here](#).

Pandemic Delivery Service:

The Government has advised that from 1st April 2021 all clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) patients in England will no longer be required to shield; all CEV patients should have received a [letter](#) notifying them of this. [Learn more about the end of shielding](#)

Community pharmacy contractors should be aware that the Pandemic Delivery Service for CEV patients finished on 31st March 2021 so they should no longer be submitting claims under this option, although the service will continue for [people who have been notified of the need to self-isolate](#) by NHS Test and Trace, this option for self-isolators will then **end on 31 Mar 2022**.

The NHS Volunteer Responders programme is available to help support those who need it. Volunteers can collect and deliver shopping, medication, and other essential supplies. Visit www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk for more info.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

It is prudent to remind you of the importance of pharmacy staff wearing the appropriate PPE in line with the latest guidelines to protect themselves, their colleagues, and patients when they are at work. Wearing the correct PPE is also important to mitigate the risk of potential closures of pharmacies through the Test and Trace system, please consider how you use the NHS app. [View the latest guidance for pharmacy teams on the wearing of PPE](#). If you do need to close fully or partially, please inform NHSE and also let us know as this information shows the pressures you are all under and can be useful to the PSNC.

PPE Portal:

Contractors can continue to order free of charge PPE for use in their pharmacy via the [DHSC's PPE portal](#), and should ensure they have registered for this, [find out how to do so here](#).

Do you know what to do and who you have to inform if your pharmacy has to close in an emergency?

- <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/temporary-closures-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>
- PSNC have produced a [checklist for emergency closures](#) which we would advise you follow.
- Ensure you check your company specific business continuity plan.
- PSNC also has useful information on maintaining access to pharmacy services on its [network resilience page](#).
- Alert NHS England by completing the failure to open notification platform on PharmOutcomes.
- Update your NHS 111 DoS and NHS UK website profiles, this is now a contractual requirement to keep your profiles up to date.
- Also please let the LPC know and consider dropping an email into your PCN via the goggle group.

Delivery of Pharmacy Services during the COVID-19 Lockdown:

Pharmacies should consider the delivery of both core/essential services and nationally/locally commissioned services.

Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework Essential Services consist of the following:

- **Dispensing Medicines and Appliances:** Including provision of appropriate advice to the patient to enable them to utilise the medication or appliance and to meet their personal need for general information on the item. **A suitable remote delivery mechanism for the provision of advice regarding dispensed medicines/ appliances should be in place.**
- **Repeat Dispensing**
- **Disposal of Unwanted Medicines:** The contractual requirement for community pharmacies to accept unwanted/out-of-date/waste medicines for disposal from the public **remains an important service during the COVID-19 pandemic**, but it does bring potential risks for pharmacy teams. PSNC worked with the National Pharmacy Association, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Community Pharmacy Patient Safety Group to produce the [joint guidance for community pharmacies in England](#). **If a pharmacy is temporarily unable to safely continue with the service due to clinical waste bins being full, inform the NHSE area team who will arrange an earlier bin collection.**
- **Public Health (Promotion of Health Lifestyles)**
- **Clinical Governance**
- **Signposting**
- **Support for Self-Care:** through the provision of remote or direct health care advice.

Ongoing delivery of essential services is part of the community pharmacy contractual framework. Please see 'opening hours' information regarding any local dispensations and options for closed door working and the flexible provision of hours.

NHS Advanced services which can be delivered remotely during the lockdown include:

- New Medicines Service (NMS)
- Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS)

Locally commissioned enhanced services:

For specific COVID-safe service delivery considerations, please refer to the 'Restarting Services

Document' shared via direct email to all pharmacies.

Services for people who use drugs:

Services should continue during lockdown; however contingency arrangements should be discussed with the local Drug Action Team, to ensure alternative solutions are in place to support clients who are supervised, or have daily pick up who are symptomatic or isolating. [See shared care service provision guidance.](#)

If you are unable to provide a locally commissioned service which your pharmacy holds a contract to deliver, you must **check the contract terms** to determine any steps you may need to undertake in order to avoid a breach of contract.

The contract may require you to contact the commissioner to discuss any temporary issues regarding provision of the service.

Opening hours:

Contractors are reminded that the [declaration of emergency requiring the flexible provision of pharmaceutical services](#), has been extended to **31st Jan 2022**. This allows contractors with adequate reason to request temporary opening hours (days or times) provided they give 24 hours' notice to NHSE&I.

Further information about the emergency regulations is available on PSNC's [network resilience page](#).

Signing of prescriptions and submission of EPS tokens now required:

Following the lifting of the [temporary suspension of signatures on prescription forms and tokens](#) on 1 September 2021, the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) have issued the following [guidance](#) on exemption checking to aid pharmacy teams. [Click here](#) for more info on what contractors MUST do.

[Visit our Network Resilience page](#)