



Welcome to the Humber & North Yorkshire 2nd edition of the Oral Contraception Newsletter. This newsletter is aimed at pharmacies across Humber & North Yorkshire and aims to support the delivery of the NHS Pharmacy Contraception Advanced Service (PCS).

What is the Pharmacy Contraception Service?

From 1st December 2023, the service specification was updated to include initiation of oral contraception as well as ongoing management of routine oral contraception that was started in general practice or a sexual health clinic so pharmacists signed up to provide this service must now provide both elements e.g. initiation and ongoing supply of oral contraception

The supplies, whether it is the combined pill or progesterone only pill, will be authorised via a Patient Group Direction (PGD), with required checks, such as BP and BMI, being undertaken which is fed back to the GP practice or sexual health provider with the patients' consent.

Training Requirements

Section 5 of the service specification [NHS England » NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service](#) emphasises that staff delivering this service **must** feel competent to do so. So that staff do feel able to deliver the service and competent in the clinical skills and knowledge required to deliver all aspects of the service, there are recommendations for training within section 5. There may be other ways to feel competent such as observing a colleague who is already delivering the service undertake a consultation. However you choose to do this, you must keep evidence of anything you do. **Please remember, if you are registered to deliver this service then you must be ready to provide this service.**

How can I sign up to provide it?

Community Pharmacies sign up to provide the service via MYS. For those who **did not** sign up before the 29th February 2024 deadline, you can still sign up via MYS.

Which patients can be seen and how can I identify them?

For patients in need of either initiation of repeat supply of their oral contraception, they can present to a pharmacy themselves to request the service. General practices and sexual health clinics can also signpost patients for either reason to a community pharmacy that is registered to deliver the service. They can come directly to the pharmacy and **do not** have to be formally referred.

Community Pharmacy England has produced a briefing for pharmacy team, includes tips to encourage uptake of the service. The briefing is available [here](#).

How will it help care navigators, reception teams and practices?

By GP practices promoting this service, it will release appointments for other patients who do need to access services from the practice. So, when patients ring to ask to be started on oral contraception or for their repeat medication, or a pill check they can be directed by the reception teams or care navigators to those community pharmacies providing the service and as more patients become aware of the service, they can go to the community pharmacy themselves. A patient does not need a referral to access this service.

Why is this good for patients?

Community Pharmacy has long been the first port of call for many people seeking advice and information about health concerns. For some patients, being signposted to the pharmacy will improve awareness of how you can meet their needs and the other services you provide. Pharmacists are experts in the use of medicines and can provide advice for a wide range of conditions. The Oral Contraception Service within community pharmacy provides patients with greater choice and access when considering where to go for their contraception.

Freeing up capacity in general practice to focus on those patients who have more complex needs helps support the wider healthcare needs of a locality in a more efficient way. Practices and local community pharmacy colleagues should work together to ensure any barriers to accessing the service are overcome and to ensure as many patients as possible use the service.

Are there any cases studies I can look at to see how this service will benefit patients?

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/pharmacy-contraception-service-growing-peoples-confidence-in-local-nhs-care/>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/case-study-community-pharmacy-contraception-service-involve-your-whole-team-for-success/>

How will the GP practice know if a patient has been seen in Community Pharmacy?

The information will be fed back to the GP, if the patient consents, to ensure that the patients' record is up to date with the care they have received. Currently this is via nhs mail, but digital systems are being developed to enable this information to be fed back electronically to GP practices or sexual health providers.