

Temporary opening hours during an emergency requiring the flexible provision of pharmaceutical services

The updated Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) standard operating procedure for community pharmacies was released 11 August 2020.

NHSE&I have removed the flexible opening provision that allowed pharmacies to close their doors to the public for up to 2.5 hours a day, however the emergency regulations for use during a pandemic remain in place to contractors until 30 November 2020.

Request to work behind closed doors

NHS England and NHS improvement expects all community pharmacies to be operating their full contracted hours. If the pharmacy feels that they need to work behind closed doors for any of their contracted hours, permission must first be requested from NHS England and NHS Improvement by emailing england.eastmidsparmacy@nhs.net. A reason must be given for working behind closed doors.

Request for regulatory amendment to contracted hours

Pharmacies wishing to apply to NHS England and NHS Improvement for a temporary change to the days or times of which they are obliged to provide pharmaceutical services at their pharmacy premises, are required to complete an application form giving 24 hours' notice and a reason for the temporary closure to; england.eastmidsparmacy@nhs.net.

It is expected that the emergency regulation will end 30 November 2020 and that all pharmacies will return to normal contracted hours from 01 December 2020.

Any changes to the pharmacy's contracted hours if agreed would need to be reflected within the pharmacy's NHS 111 Directory and NHS UK profile. Further information on updating the pharmacy's NHS 111 directory of service and NHS UK profile can be found within the SOP. In the event that an application is refused the pharmacy would be expected to return to normal hours immediately.

Further information and a copy of the SOP can also be found on the PSNC website <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/updated-covid-19-sop-volunteers-liability-clarified-and-opening-hours-flexibility-removed/>

If you have any questions then please send your enquiry from the NHS Net pharmacy specific email to england.eastmidsparmacy@nhs.net.