

Community Pharmacy Bulletin

Date: 28 March 2024

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Revised NHS South West Temporary Suspension Policy

On Monday 25th April, the revised policy titled, South West Community Pharmacy Local Policy for Temporary Suspension of Service v3.0 was circulated to all community pharmacies in the South West. This policy is to be implemented across the South West with effect from the 1st April 2024 and will supersede any previous versions of the policy. Please ensure you read the updated policy and share this with your pharmacy team.

The local policy describes a set of principles for community pharmacy to follow in managing Temporary Suspensions, including implementing their business continuity plan and demonstrating they have used all reasonable endeavors to resume the provision of services. The local policy sets out the approach the South West Pharmaceutical Services Regulations Committee (SW PSRC) and the Commissioner takes when monitoring and using contractual sanctions in relation to temporary suspension of services in Community Pharmacy across the 7 South West ICBs. This includes breach notices and financial withholdings based on the number of breaches.

Change to Reporting of Temporary Suspension of Services April 2024

Please ensure you understand the need to complete the online Microsoft Form 'Pharmacy Contractor Notification of a Temporary Suspension of Service' for each Temporary Suspension. Temporary suspensions reported to us (the commissioner) in any other format or version of this form will not be accepted. The form enables you/your team to confirm how you have implemented your business continuity plan and to declare you have used all reasonable endeavors to resume pharmaceutical services as soon as possible in the event of a temporary suspension of service. The South West 'Contractor Notification of a Temporary Suspension of Service' Form is located on the NHS England South West Community Pharmacy website via an online Microsoft Form. Click below:

- [Pharmacy contractor notification of a Temporary Suspension of Services](#)

Once completed online the Microsoft form will be automatically sent to the commissioner. All further correspondence relating to the temporary suspension of services will be communicated using the pharmacy's NHS mail shared pharmacy email account.

GP Connect Update Record

GP Connect: Update Record is a new feature that Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) will add to CPCF IT systems, so that community pharmacy service consultation data will automatically flow from the pharmacy system to the GP system. This reduces the need for the pharmacy to send an NHSmail to the GP practice regarding consultations.

IT suppliers that rollout the feature plan to cover pharmacy consultations for the Pharmacy First service, the Hypertension Case-Finding Service, and the Pharmacy Contraception Service. The rollout of this feature is dependent on testing and monitoring. IT suppliers should communicate with their users as they add the feature for more of their users.

['GP Connect Update Record': rollout and flow of information - Community Pharmacy England \(cpe.org.uk\)](#)

Drug Tariff changes – 1st April 2024

The Drug Tariff Preface published monthly lists additions, deletions and other changes to products listed in the Drug Tariff. Below is a summary from CPE of the **changes coming into effect from 1 April 2024**.

[Drug Tariff Watch – April 2024 - Community Pharmacy England \(cpe.org.uk\)](#)

HRT prescribing for PPCs-GP IT Update

As announced in the NHS Primary Care bulletin (published 14 March 2024), over half of GP surgeries have digital solutions available to automate the issuing of listed HRT items as single-item prescriptions at the point of prescribing (separate prescriptions for each HRT item). This is something that NHS England and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) had committed to enabling when the HRT Pre-Payment Certificate (HRT PPC) was first introduced in April 2023.

NHS England and DHSC are continuing to work together with IT suppliers to implement changes across all GP IT systems over the coming months. In the meantime, where a change hasn't yet been automated, please remember that prescribers are required to issue all HRT items as single-item prescriptions.

The NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013 gives three options to pharmacy teams handling 'mixed' prescriptions presented by patients with an HRT PPC. Pharmacy teams **may** either:

1. **First**, refuse to dispense a 'mixed' prescription issued to the patient – refuse to dispense both the listed HRT medicine and the other item – and ask the patient to return to the GP for two separate prescriptions.
2. **Second**, either:
 - dispense the listed HRT medicine (the patient or the patient's representative signing to claim the HRT prescription exemption), or
 - dispense the other non-HRT item(s) with the prescription charge(s) paid. (This may be appropriate if the patient has an urgent clinical need for the listed HRT medicine or non-HRT item(s), the patient will need to obtain another prescription for any items not dispensed)
3. **Third**, dispense both the listed HRT medicine and the non-HRT item(s) – and complete an FP57 refund form for the listed HRT medicine (there is a charge and refund for the HRT medicines, so no money changes hands) and a charge taken for the non-HRT item(s).

For additional guidance see our [Briefing 008/23: FAQs to support DHSC guidance on the new HRT prescription prepayment certificate \(HRT PPC\)](#).

Advanced Services

Pharmacy First: Requirement to have an Otoscope from 1st April 2024

Pharmacy owners are reminded that from 1st April 2024, they must have an otoscope available, and all clinical pathways must be provided in bricks and mortar* pharmacies registered to provide the Pharmacy First service.

This deadline was highlighted in the NHS England letter [announcing the Pharmacy First service](#), which advised that pharmacy owners could start providing the service on 31st January 2024, excluding the acute otitis media pathway, as long as an order for an otoscope had been placed and they were awaiting delivery.

*Distance Selling Pharmacies are not able to provide the acute otitis media pathway, as it requires otoscope examination of the patient's ear and that is not possible via a remote video consultation.

Pharmacy First Signposting

With Pharmacy First supporting sore throat and sinusitis symptoms; please find a useful reference to help support patients.

[Educational Resources | Mouth Cancer Foundation](#)

Pharmacy First Declaration Data

We are aware that several pharmacies had issues with the MYS portal for Pharmacy First declarations and took advantage of the extended deadline to submit their pharmacy first declaration which was the **25 March 2024**.

To remember this extension will not affect your payment for NHS Pharmacy First activity. You will receive payment for **February's** declaration on Wednesday 1 May 2024.

Later submissions will be accepted if made within three months of Tuesday 5 March 2024, but late declarations will result in delay to your payment. It is important to remember any submissions made after the three-month period cannot be accepted.

LFD Service: New eligible patient groups from 1st April

The Lateral flow device tests supply service for patients potentially eligible for COVID-19 treatments (LFD service) will continue to be commissioned as an Advanced service in 2024/25.

In addition, **from 1st April 2024**, the following additional patient groups will be eligible to access the LFD service, as well as those previously eligible for the service:

- People aged 85 years and over.
- People with end-stage heart failure who have a long-term ventricular assistance device.
- People on the organ transplant waiting list.
- People aged 70 years and over, or who have a BMI of 35 kg/m² or more, diabetes or heart failure, an
 - Are resident in a care home; or
 - Are already hospitalised.

The change in eligible patients for the LFD service, follows updated National Institute for Health and Care Excellence [guidance](#) on patient groups eligible for COVID-19 treatments and increases the number of patients eligible to use the service to around 5.3 million people.

Pharmacy owners are advised to read the updated service specification, update their standard operating procedure for the service, where applicable and brief their pharmacy teams on the changes.

[Read the updated service specification](#)

[Read more about the LFD service and view the support materials available to help you provide the service](#)

Flu Vac: NHSE publishes 2024/25 Service Specification.

NHS England has published the service specification for the **2024/25 Community Pharmacy Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Advanced Service**.

This early publication aims to support the planning and provision of the service by pharmacy owners and will assist any service providers should an autumn COVID-19 vaccination service be considered, as any pharmacy owners seeking to provide COVID-19 vaccinations must also provide the Flu Vaccination Service.

[Please follow Link for further information](#)

Health Campaigns

Hypertension Case-Finding Service: Get your Blood Pressure checked.

On 11th March 2024, The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), launched an [NHS campaign](#) to encourage members of the public who could be living with undiagnosed high blood pressure to get their blood pressure checked at a participating pharmacy.

The campaign, backed by British Heart Foundation, Stroke Association, Heart Research UK, Blood Pressure UK, May Measurement Month, British Society for Heart Failure, and more, warns that there are often 'no clues' about who might have high blood pressure.

[Read More Here](#)

If your pharmacy delivers the [NHS Blood Pressure Check Service](#), please ensure your details are up to date in the look up-tool and order free campaign resources from the [Campaign Resource Centre](#).

Please note this is not a mandatory campaign.

Better Health: Every Mind Matters Campaign.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has launched their new loneliness campaign activity as part of the [Better Health: Every Mind Matters campaign](#), led by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC).

The campaign primarily aims to reach 16-34 year olds by encouraging them to 'Lift Someone Out of Loneliness', knowing that this will likely help their own feelings of loneliness. This is based on recent research that shows that people in this demographic are at higher risk of feeling lonely compared to other age groups, but are less likely to seek advice and support.

If you require further information or would like to be involved in supporting the campaign in 2024, please contact campaigns@dcms.gov.uk.

If you or someone you know is feeling lonely, search 'Loneliness Every Mind Matters' for support and advice or go to <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/lifes-challenges/loneliness/>.

Quality & Regulations

GPhC addresses Racism and Language Barriers in Pharmacy with new reports.

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) has published new reports on racism and inequalities in pharmacy, following virtual equality discussions held with various key stakeholders.

The reports, titled [Racism in Pharmacy: Accountability Counts](#) and [Language Barriers and Health Inequalities](#), were derived from a [series of virtual equality roundtables](#) and shaped by input from pharmacy professionals and

other key stakeholders. These included patient groups, equality advocates, translation service providers, and professionals from wider health and care settings.

GPhC has emphasised its commitment to combatting discrimination within the pharmacy sector through its [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Strategy](#) and by using the GPhC standards to actively support pharmacy teams as they work to provide person-centred inclusive care and reduce health inequalities.

Recognising the impact of language barriers, the GPhC's [Equality Guidance for Registered Pharmacies](#) also highlights the significance of providing accessible and inclusive services. It offers practical examples for pharmacies to address language barriers while effectively managing associated risks.

Find out more information on the latest EDI developments from GPhC, including case studies and diversity data reports [click here](#).

Training & Development

Market Entry Applications – 10 Key Points Guidance

Community Pharmacy England are continuing to liaise with NHS England (which can provide advice to ICBs on market entry issues) and PCSE to try to help reduce the overall timescales for the determination of applications.

They have produced a guidance document with [10 key points](#) to support applicants and their referees with their market entry applications.

If applicants are struggling to resolve issues with PCSE and the delays with their application are lengthy, please contact the Regulations Team by email at regulations.team@cpe.org.uk.

They will need some basic information on your application, for example, the CAS reference number allocated by PCSE and where it has got to in the process. They will seek to liaise with PCSE and the ICB on your behalf to

Shortages

Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs)

All current Serious Shortage Protocols can be viewed via [BSA website](#).

If you have any questions regarding SSPs please contact the NHS Prescription Service:

- Email: nhsbsa.prescriptionservices@nhsbsa.nhs.uk
- Telephone: 0300 330 1349
- Textphone: 18001 0300 330 1349

DHSC Medicine Supply Notifications

DHSC and NHSE/I have now launched an online [Medicines Supply Tool](#), which provides up to date information about medicine supply issues. The contents of these MSNs can now be viewed on the Tool. The Tool also details any changes to resupply dates and updates to the entries. To access the Tool, you will be required to register with the [SPS website](#).

The Medicine Supply Tool is moving on the SPS website. Update your links and bookmark its new home in the 'Tools' section: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/home/tools/medicines-supply-tool/>

Medicine Alerts

For information on medical alerts, recalls and safety information regarding drugs and medical devices please see the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency below:

[Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Digital & Technology

Updating NHS Website Profile and DoS Profile

Please ensure any changes to your opening times, contact information and services information including advanced services are updated using Profile Manager to ensure your pharmacy's NHS website profile and your DoS profile are kept up to date at all times.

Guidance and helpful video tutorials on how to check and update your profile using NHS Profile Manager can be found here [NHS Profile Manager](#).

NHS Smart Card

Could all contractors please ensure all pharmacists, especially locums, are reminded to ensure they have their smartcard with them for all shifts. This is especially critical at weekends and on bank holidays as there is likely to be more limited access to pharmaceutical services on these days.

If you have received automated messages about NHS smartcard renewal, please renew them as soon as possible.

If NHS Digital do not manage to increase the rate of renewal now, it will inevitably result in a rush of users requiring smartcard renewals through the Care Identity Service with increasing urgency.

This could lead to delays in access to systems and services, due to backlogs of renewals being requested for processing by Registration Authorities. Any impact on the Care Identity Service will not affect authentication and access to clinical systems for users with a valid smartcard. Please use the link for smartcard renewals [Self-renewal NHS smartcard service - NHS Digital](#)

Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSP) 2023/2024

There are several planned webinars providing a Data Security and Protection Toolkit update, and question and answer session. The events are aimed at organisations who are working on their DSP Toolkits for 2023-24.

Please see link below for further information: [News \(dsptoolkit.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/news/dsptoolkit)

The deadline for the Data Security and Protection Toolkit is **30th June 2024**.

A downloadable copy of the Assertions and Evidence items for the 2023-24 Data Security and Protection Toolkit is [Assertions and Evidence Items 23-4 V6.xlsx](#)

Please note – Headquarter Organisations

When completing the Data Security and Protection Toolkit, if you are submitting under a 'Headquarters' organisation, e.g., completing the toolkit for several branches under one headquarter code; please ensure you select all the appropriate linked branches. If you do not select the branches linked under your headquarter organisation those branches will not be compliant.

GDPR email requirements

We would like to remind all contractors any emails containing patient identifiable information must be sent from a secure email address, preferably the pharmacies shared generic nhs.net store email address. Any emails with patient details must not be sent from a non-secure email address as this could result in a breach of GDPR.

Please see attached the guidance regarding the investigation and reporting of incidents where any potential breach of GDPR has occurred.

Email Correspondence – Signature Details

Please can you ensure when communicating with the NHS South West Collaborative Commissioning Hub's Community Pharmacy Team you include the following details within your correspondence to help us with responding to your enquiry. Many thanks.

- Contact Name
- Name of Contractor
- ODS Code (F Code)

Useful Information

Temporary Suspensions of Pharmaceutical Services

Following changes to the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013 from 31st July 2023, it is a Terms of Service requirement for each NHS community pharmacy owner to have a business continuity plan for a temporary suspension of service due to illness or other reasons beyond their control, and to action this when necessary.

In accordance with regulations, contractors must notify the commissioner of any temporary suspension in service; including those for reasons due to illness or causes beyond the control of the contractor. In accordance with pharmacy regulations contractors must provide evidence to the commissioner they have undertaken the following:

- Notified the commissioner of the suspension as soon as practical.
- Used all reasonable endeavors to implement the business continuity plan required by paragraph 29D, Schedule 4 of the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013, and
- Used all reasonable endeavors to resume the provision of pharmaceutical services as soon as is practicable. (Paragraph 23(10), Schedule 4, of the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013.

In the event of you being unable to open please complete a Temporary Suspension closure form which can be found [here](#) and send this to our generic email address: england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net

Please click the link below to take you to the Microsoft Form:

- [Pharmacy contractor notification of a Temporary Suspension of Services](#)

Important Reminder: Changes of director and/or superintendent pharmacist.

When a body corporate appoints a new director and / or a new superintendent they must inform the commissioner within 30 days of the person taking up that new position. Recent experience suggests that contractors sometimes overlook making these declarations.

To make such a declaration you should go to the Primary Care Support England (PCSE) website at <https://pcse.england.nhs.uk/services/pharmacy-market-administration-services/market-entry/> where you will be able to complete the necessary declarations.

Failure to notify any changes to directors and / or superintendent pharmacist maybe a breach of your terms of service.

Pharmacy Support for Health & Wellbeing

Please see below support available for our NHS people with free confidential coaching and support for the primary care workforce.

- Wellbeing apps:
 - NHS staff have been given free access to a number of wellbeing apps to support their mental health and wellbeing.
 - Link: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/wellbeing-apps/>
- Mental Health and Wellbeing:
 - Guidance and advice on how you can stay mentally healthy and boost your wellbeing from Pharmacists' Support.
 - Link: <https://pharmacistsupport.org/i-need-help-managing-my/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>
- Addiction support:
 - Information about the free and confidential addiction support provided by Pharmacists Support.
 - Link: <https://pharmacistsupport.org/how-we-can-help/addiction-support-programme/>
- Managing your finances:
 - Information and guidance on money management and finding financial assistance from Pharmacists Support.
 - Link: <https://pharmacistsupport.org/i-need-help-managing-my/finances/>
- Physical Health:
 - Support on Physical Health from Pharmacists Support, including how to easily incorporate exercise and healthy eating into your daily routine, and the benefits of doing so.
 - Link: <https://pharmacistsupport.org/i-need-help-managing-my/physical-health/>
- Royal Pharmaceutical Society Wellbeing Guide
 - Wellbeing Guide from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society
 - Link: <https://www.rpharms.com/resources/pharmacy-guides/your-wellbeing>

Training Resources for Pharmacists

- E-learning: Dealing with difficult discussions:
 - E-learning programme from the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education.
 - Link: <https://www.cppe.ac.uk/programmes/l/diffdisc-e-01>
- Resource Pack: Stopping violence in the Pharmacy:
 - Resource pack from the pharmacists' defence association.
 - Link: <https://www.the-pda.org/wp-content/uploads/stopping-violence-resources.pdf>

Community Pharmacy Complaints

The current primary care complaint's function transferred from NHS England to ICBs in July 2023. Primary care services include GPs, dentists, opticians, and pharmacy services.

From 1 July 2023 the way members of the public make a complaint about primary care services to the commissioner has changed. Rather than contacting NHS England or their contact centre they must now contact the ICB where the patient is located.

Therefore, all Pharmacies should now update their information for patient complaints, displaying the correct contact details for their area. Below are the links to the relevant ICB websites showing the details you will need to update your SOP and patient poster.

ICB Websites

- [Somerset](#)
- [Devon](#)
- [Dorset](#)
- [Cornwall](#)
- [Gloucestershire](#)
- [Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire](#)
- [Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire](#)

To help support this change Community Pharmacy England (Previously PSNC) have also updated template, which pharmacy contractors may find helpful when updating their complaints poster. Copy attached with the bulletin.

Interpretation and Translation Services

Interpretation and translation services are available for Community Pharmacies when treating NHS Patients. These services are commissioned and paid for by NHS England.

The information and how to access these are available on the South West Pharmacy website page via the following link [Interpretation & Translation Services](#).

The services commissioned cover the following areas:

- Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG)
 - Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire (BSW)
 - Cornwall & Isles of Scilly
 - Devon
 - Dorset
 - Gloucestershire
 - Somerset
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Contact Details and Further Information

South West Collaborative Commissioning Hub Community Pharmacy Contract Management Team contact information: email: england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net.

Website: [South West Community Pharmacy information](#) for more further information, blank templates, forms, and documents.