

Community Pharmacy Bulletin

Date: 22 August 2025

Headline News

- August Bank Holiday 2
- Upcoming changes to Manage Your Service (MYS) Portal 2
- Public Switched Telephone Network Migration – Action Required 3
- Dispensing Doctors: Dispensing Services Quality Scheme (DSQS) 4

Campaign Information

- World Pharmacists Day is on the 25th of September 4
- Know Your Numbers! From the 8th of September to 14th September 4
- World Suicide Prevention Day- 10th September 5
- Macmillan Coffee Morning 5

Useful Information

- Social media – NHS England and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) 6
- GDPR email requirements 6
- Email Correspondence – Signature Details 6
- Serious Shortage protocols (SSP's) 6
- DHSC medicine Supply notifications 7
- Medical Alerts 7
- Reporting a Temporary Suspension in Service 7
- Pharmaceutical Clinical Waste 7
- Changes of director and/or superintendent pharmacist 8
- SouthWest Controlled Drugs team 8
- Drug and Alcohol Services 9
- NHSBSA Hints and Tips 9
- Pharmacy Support for Health & Wellbeing 9
- Interpretation and Translation Services 10
- Contact Details and Further Information 10
- Monthly Riddle 10

August Bank Holiday

- Please check the pharmacy information is correct, including the telephone number, the hours for all usual working days before and after the bank holidays and any hours for the bank holidays we have recorded. Any corrections, please advise by email to england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net.
- Please ensure your records for NHS.UK and DoS are updated using [Profile Manager](#) as soon as possible for any hours you will be open on the bank holidays .
- 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.

Upcoming changes to Manage Your Service (MYS) Portal

Important changes being made to the MYS pharmacy portal, designed to improve user experience.

The new-look MYS portal will be launched on Thursday 21 August 2025.

Please note: the portal will be temporarily unavailable from 7:00am to 8:30am on that day while the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) implements the changes.

The update introduces several enhancements aimed at making navigation and claim submission easier, including:

- Refreshed side panel – clearer navigation links with:
 - A redesigned *Services* section, displaying each service as a separate tile for easier access.
 - The *Prescription Submissions* section for the monthly FP34C declaration.
- Status messages – a new yellow banner at the top of the portal will provide important updates and guidance for submissions.
- Archiving feature – users can now archive disallowed prescription items they do not wish to challenge, keeping claims more organised.
- Updated referred-backs section – improved layout with expandable sections to clearly separate referred-back items.
- Contextual help text – displayed alongside free-text fields to support users in entering missing information (e.g. product name).
- Automatic archiving – prescription items will be archived once pharmacy owners have been paid.

What's staying the same

- The URL for accessing the MYS portal
- The claim submission window
- Pharmacy or staff login credentials
- No action is required from pharmacy teams at this stage.
- NHSBSA has already emailed pharmacies with images of the updated design to support teams ahead of the launch.
- Users will also be notified by email once the updated portal is live.

Public Switched Telephone Network Migration – Action Required

As you may be aware, the telecommunications industry is in the final stages of upgrading telephone networks from analogue to digital. This is known as the migration of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

The decision to retire the PSTN has been driven by necessity, as the current analogue network is increasingly unreliable and prone to failure. Migrating to VoIP is a critical step in modernising telecommunications infrastructure, improving reliability, efficiency, and resilience across all sectors, including the NHS.

VoIP offers several advantages over traditional PSTN services, including:

- Improved call quality
- Greater scalability
- Enhanced reliability
- Cost-effectiveness

This upgrade also supports wider work to digitalise NHS services.

What pharmacies need to do

- Check your systems: All pharmacies must ensure that their telephony systems have successfully migrated to VoIP as soon as possible.
- Contact your provider: Please reach out to your communications provider (e.g., BT, VMO2, Sky, Vodafone, TalkTalk) to arrange the upgrade or to cancel services no longer required.
- Deadline: The PSTN will be completely switched off in January 2027.

The PSTN may also support other services, such as:

- Fire and lift alarms
- Payment systems
- Fax machines
- Some medical devices

It is critical that you identify which systems in your pharmacy rely on PSTN and take action to upgrade or terminate them where appropriate.

Priority: Ensure that prescription services are not affected by the PSTN switch-off and are upgraded well ahead of the January 2027 deadline.

Impact on your customers

Many patients will already have had their residential services upgraded. However, it is important to note that vulnerable patients—particularly those who rely on telecare (personal care alarms)—are being safeguarded during this process.

Next steps for pharmacies

If your pharmacy has not yet been upgraded, please contact your communications provider as a matter of urgency to arrange migration to VoIP.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your support in safeguarding patient access to care.

Dispensing Doctors: Dispensing Services Quality Scheme (DSQS)

Thank you, those dispensing practices who have returned their Quarter 1 SEA/Serious Untoward Incidents for 25/26

A gentle reminder that the recommended deadline for the return of these submissions was Thursday 31st July 2025

Once completed please return on email to england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net

Whilst we recommend you complete the return on the date specified above this is only voluntary and you do still have up until the end of the year; 31 March 2026 to submit all evidence for DSQS.

Campaign Information

World Pharmacists Day is on the 25th of September

Pharmacists are at the heart of our communities. They're often the first friendly face you see when you need advice, support, or care. From making sure medicines are safe and available, to giving vaccinations, supporting public health, and lending a listening ear, pharmacists are always there to help.

Every day, they make a difference – protecting health, easing worries, and guiding millions of people to live healthier lives.

World Pharmacists Day is our chance to say **Thank You** to pharmacists everywhere for the care, expertise, and compassion they bring. It's also a reminder that when we invest in pharmacists, we invest in a healthier future for us all.

This year let's celebrate together – because to truly think health, you must think pharmacist.

Know Your Numbers! From the 8th of September to 14th September

1.5 million

Over 1.5 million people have had a free blood pressure check during *Know Your Numbers! Week* – the UK's biggest blood pressure testing and awareness event.

120/80

An ideal blood pressure is under 120/80mmHg. Do you *Know Your Numbers*? Find your nearest blood pressure check today.

6 million

Around 6 million people in the UK have high blood pressure and don't know it. Could you help us reach them?

350

Every day, 350 people in the UK have a stroke or heart attack that could have been prevented. That's why *Know Your Numbers! Week* is so important.

We believe every adult in the UK should know their blood pressure numbers – just like they know their height and weight. When you *Know Your Numbers!* you can take steps to protect your heart, look after your blood pressure, and live a longer, healthier life.

More information can be found using the following link [Blood Pressure UK](#)

This is not a mandatory campaign

World Suicide Prevention Day- 10th September

September 10th is World Suicide Prevention Day, a chance for organisations and communities around the world to come together to raise awareness and campaign for better suicide prevention.

If you think someone might be suicidal, take action, interrupt their thoughts, and show them you care.

Small interruptions you make and actions you take could help someone who is suicidal. You don't have to be an expert to save someone's life.

This year's World Suicide Prevention Day campaign was co-created with people who have experienced suicidal thoughts. They've shared real, practical ways you can help someone you might be worried about. To learn more about how to interrupt someone's suicidal thoughts visit: [World Suicide Prevention Day | Campaigns | Samaritans](#)

Let's prevent suicide today. Because tomorrow is too late.

This is not a mandatory campaign

Macmillan Coffee Morning

The official date for Coffee Morning 2025 is Friday 26 September, but you can host your event whenever it suits you best.

The very first Coffee Morning took place back in 1990. It was a simple idea – friends gathered over a cup of coffee and donated the cost of their drink to Macmillan. It worked so well, the following year it became a nationwide event.

Since then, Coffee Mornings have grown into something truly special. They now happen in all shapes and sizes – from small get-togethers at home, to big community or workplace events, school fundraisers, or even something a little different like a kitchen disco, a chai afternoon tea, or even wild swimming followed by cake!

No matter how you choose to do it, every Coffee Morning has one thing in common – raising vital funds to support the almost 3.5 million people in the UK living with cancer.

Macmillan is 98% funded by voluntary donations, which means Coffee Mornings make an incredible difference. However big or small your event, you'll be helping us to be there for people with cancer – from the moment they're diagnosed, through treatment and beyond.

It's your Coffee Morning, your way. And together, we can make sure no one has to face cancer alone.

This is not a mandatory campaign

Useful Information

Social media – NHS England and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)

Stay connected with NHS England and your local ICB on social media. Keep up to date with posts on the latest news and information about local and national healthcare initiatives as well as information about opportunities to have your say and find out more about projects and plans in your region.

Organisation	X	Facebook	Instagram
NHS England SW	@NHSSW	https://www.facebook.com/NHSSW	@nhssouthwest
BNSSG ICB	@BNSSG_ICB	https://www.facebook.com/BNSSGICB	@bnssg_icb
BSW ICB	@BSW_Together	https://www.facebook.com/NHSBSWICB	@nhsbswccg
Cornwall and IoS ICB	@ciosicb	https://www.facebook.com/ciosicb	
Devon ICB	@NHSDevon	https://www.facebook.com/NHSDevon	@nhsdevon
Dorset ICB	@NHSDorset	https://www.facebook.com/NHSDorset	@nhsdorset
Gloucestershire ICB	@NHSGlos	https://www.facebook.com/nhsglos	@nhsgloucestershire
Somerset ICB	@NHSSomerset	https://www.facebook.com/NHSSomerset1	

GDPR email requirements

We would like to remind all contractors that any email 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.

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)

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)

Reporting a Temporary Suspension of Service

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 that 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 via one of the following ways either:

1. via [Manage Your Service \(MYS\) portal](#).
2. Completing the Temporary Suspension Form found [here](#) titled Annex 18 and sending this to the SW generic email address: england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net.

Details of the new Temporary Suspension policy can be found [here](#), the new temporary suspension policy went live on the 1st of April.

Pharmaceutical Clinical Waste- Waste Segregation

Effective segregation of waste delivers important benefits for workplace health and safety. With the correct waste type disposed of in the right containers, needlestick injuries can be reduced, the risk of dangerous infections and diseases can be better controlled, and staff and patients are protected from encountering hazardous substances that could cause them harm. It also means that everyone who handles the waste once it leaves your site is protected, and with correctly segregated waste reaching the most appropriate place for treatment and disposal.

If you have any queries with regards to the collection of clinical waste from your premises e.g. a missed collection or issues with the frequency of collection; please contact the SW Collaborative hub on england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net.

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 may be a breach of your terms of service.

South West Controlled Drugs Team

Following the roll out of the Pharmacy First Urgent Supply of Repeat Medicines Service, we would like to take this opportunity to remind colleagues to please consider the following points before making supplies as part of this service:

- Supplies carried out for urgent repeat medicines supply under Pharmacy First **MUST** comply with emergency supply legislation (regulation 225 HMR 2012), including **the pharmacist being satisfied that there is an immediate need and that it is not practical for the patient to obtain a prescription without undue delay**. An entry **MUST** be made in the POM register and the medicine labelled 'emergency supply'. The medicine **MUST** have been previously prescribed, and consideration should be given to when it was last prescribed.
- Legislation **limits any supplies** of Schedule 4, and 5 controlled drugs made through this service **to five days**. This includes codeine containing products such as co-codamol which are schedule 5 controlled drugs. This restriction also applies to other lower schedule-controlled drugs including dihydrocodeine, diazepam, lorazepam, morphine sulfate solution 10mg/5ml, zopiclone, zolpidem, testosterone and others. If a medicine comes in a container containing more than 5 days' supply, that cannot be split, it is not legal to supply (this applies to most testosterone products).
- Codeine, related products and other lower schedule-controlled drugs are medicines that can be subject to abuse and pharmacists should always access the patient's national care record or where available the GP record via GP Connect: Access Record and check for previous supplies. If a patient refuses to provide consent to view their clinical record, consideration should be given as to whether it is clinically appropriate to make that supply.
- Please also be aware that **it is for the pharmacist to determine whether any urgent medicines referral to supply a medicine is appropriate**, not the person who issued the referral. The supplying pharmacist needs to balance the potential for misuse against clinical need and to consider any impact on the patient if not supplying a medicine or appliance, and also if supplying. If thought appropriate, a limited supply of one or two days can be considered to allow the patient time to access their GP practice.
- Please note that with the exception of supply of phenobarbitone for the treatment of epilepsy, **schedule 1, 2 or 3 controlled drugs** (including tramadol) **cannot be supplied under emergency supply regulations**
- If a referral is received for a controlled drug that cannot be supplied under emergency supply regulations and the pharmacist believes that there is a genuine patient need to obtain a supply of their medicine, although it would not be possible to make an emergency supply, the pharmacist should ensure the patient is able to speak to another appropriate healthcare professional by either:
 - Referring the patient to their own general practice; or
 - By contacting a local out-of-hour provider.

An entry should be made to the Pharmacy First IT system, and a consultation fee can be claimed in this instance.

Please report any controlled drug incidents to us via our reporting website www.cdreporting.co.uk The NHSE SW Controlled Drugs Team can be contacted at ENGLAND.southwestcontroledrugs@nhs.net

Drug and Alcohol Services

Below are the contact details for your local drug and alcohol service. In the event of temporary suspension of service at your premises please ensure you contact your local service provider to make arrangements for the continuity of patient care for those attending the pharmacy regularly for the supervised administration of medicines.

- BSW - Swindon Borough Council - SubstanceMisuseTeam@swindon.gov.uk
 - BSW - Wiltshire - <https://www.turning-point.co.uk/services/connect-wiltshire>
email: substanceUseTeam@wiltshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 0034566
 - BSW - Banes - TheBeehive@dhilbath.org.uk Tel: 01225 329411
 - BNSSG - <https://remedy.bnssg.icb.nhs.uk/adults/drug-and-alcohol-misuse/bristol-drug-and-alcohol-service/>
 - Cornwall and Isles of Scilly - Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) DAAT@cornwall.gov.uk
 - Devon - [Together - EDP Drug & Alcohol Services](#) Tel: 0800 233 5444
 - Dorset - [Dorset HealthCare :: Addictions \(Alcohol and Drugs\)](#)
 - Gloucestershire - <https://www.viaorg.uk/services/gloucestershire-2/>
email: gloucestershire@viaorguk.cjsm.net Tel: 01452 223 014
 - Somerset - <https://www.turning-point.co.uk/services/somerset> Tel: 0300 303 8788
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NHSBSA Hints and Tips

Please see below the links to the NHSBSA website and a link for previous back copies

[GP and Pharmacy support: open days, webinars and newsletters | NHSBSA](#)

<https://r1.dotdigital-pages.com/p/7R9K-79Q/sign-up-for-the-hints-tips-bulletin>

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>

Interpretation & 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 [NHS England — South West » Interpretation and 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

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.

Riddle of the Month

The answer to last month's riddle was the letter R - Well done to Will Farmer Exminster Pharmacy 🥳 for being the first to send in the correct answer

This month's riddle is

I have cities, but no houses. I have mountains, but no trees. I have water, but no fish. What am I?



Send your answers to the pharmacy team at england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net. We will share the answer in the next bulletin