

Community Pharmacy Bulletin

Date: 24 October 2025

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Community Pharmacy Assurance Framework (CPAF) 2025/26 Update

The window for completing the full questionnaire is open and will close at **23:59 on 31 October 2025**. For those pharmacies selected, please ensure that the survey is submitted on or before that date as completion of CPAF is a requirement of the Terms of Service.

It has been flagged that the questionnaire has not been accessible through MYS for some contractors. Every week all contractors should receive a reminder email from the NHSBSA. The email will also contain a link to the survey that will work, even if you cannot access the module in MYS.

National Mandated Campaign – Open 20 October 2025

As part of the [Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework \(CPCF\) 2025/26](#) pharmacy contractors are required to take part in two national health campaigns and two local health campaigns (the latter agreed by ICBs and LPCs at a local level).

Both national campaigns will focus on, and promote, the Pharmacy First service to the public.

The first campaign will run from:

Monday 20th October 2025 to Sunday 9th November 2025

All contractors must ensure they take the appropriate action to meet this contractual requirement.

Pharmacy owners can meet the requirements of the campaigns in several ways, by promoting the Pharmacy First service to the public during the campaign period, including any of the following.

- Displaying posters, leaflets or other promotional materials relating to the Pharmacy First service at the pharmacy
- Information on your pharmacy's website
- Information posted via your pharmacy's social media channels
- Including information on the service in emails or SMS you send to patients.

The first pharmacy health campaign will take place alongside a national NHS England advertising campaign promoting the Pharmacy First and Contraception Services to the public. This will run from 20 October 2025 through until early January and will include Digital (on demand) TV advertising, YouTube, Radio and other Social Media advertising. (NB – this campaign will not include promotion of the forthcoming Emergency Contraception Service, as the campaign runs ahead of the proposed Go Live date for this service expansion).

Updated digital materials that pharmacies can download and use to promote Pharmacy First will be made available on the [DHSC Campaign Resource Centre](#) (CRC) on 20 October 2025.

A further pharmacy health campaign will run from Monday 02 February 2026 to Sunday 22 February 2026.

Expansion of the NHS New Medicine Service (NMS)

In anticipation of the expansion of the NMS to introduce depression as a further therapeutic area for which patients can receive support, the updated service specification (version 2.0) has been published here:

The current service specification (version 1.0) is available on the [NHSBSA website](#) and will remain in place until the service commencement date for this enhancement is announced and authorised by NHS England.

NHS England » Advanced Service Specification – NHS New Medicine Service (NMS)

Expansion of the NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service

October 2025 update: The NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service (PCS) is being enhanced, with the service due to expand later this year to include Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EHC).

In preparation for this expanded remit, the updated service specification and Patient Group Directions (PGDs) have now been published. These updated resources will sit alongside the current service documents on the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) website. The existing materials will remain in place until NHS England confirms the official go-live date for this next phase of the service.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-pharmacy-contraception-service/>

About the Pharmacy Contraception Service

The PCS enables community pharmacies to provide timely access to contraception support. This expansion continues to:

- Increase choice and accessibility for individuals starting or continuing oral contraception
- Support sexual health and wellbeing within local communities
- Reduce health inequalities by offering care in highly accessible healthcare settings
- Create additional capacity in general practice and specialist sexual health clinics

How Patients Can Access the Service

Individuals may:

- Self-refer directly to a participating pharmacy
- Be referred by their GP, sexual health service, or equivalent
- Be identified proactively by the pharmacy team as suitable for support

Pharmacists will provide a confidential consultation, working with each person to reach a shared clinical decision on safe and appropriate continuation of contraception.

All supplies made under this NHS service are free of charge — no prescription fees apply.

It is also important to note that individuals do not need to be registered with a GP to use this service. With the patient's consent, pharmacies will inform their GP practice when contraception has been supplied to ensure continuity of care.

Real Time Exemption Checking (RTEC) – What You Need to Know

Real Time Exemption Checking (RTEC) is a digital system that allows your pharmacy IT system to automatically check whether a patient has a known exemption from prescription charges.

If an exemption is confirmed, the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) prescription is automatically flagged as *exempt*, meaning the patient does not need to complete a written declaration.

If no exemption is found, your team and the patient will continue to follow the usual paper declaration process.

Background

RTEC has been introduced in phases — initially covering NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) exemptions and later expanding to include Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) exemptions.

Community Pharmacy England recommends that all pharmacy owners register for RTEC now to streamline workflows and reduce administrative burden.

How RTEC Works

- When a prescription is processed in your dispensing system, RTEC automatically checks the patient's exemption status using data held by NHSBSA.
- The timing of the check depends on your IT supplier, who integrates this function through an API within the system.
- If an exemption is confirmed, the prescription is treated as exempt — no token or manual declaration is required.
- If an exemption is not confirmed, the usual process applies: the patient completes a declaration on the EPS token.

In most cases, only one check is required. However, a second check can be carried out if the patient queries the result or believes they should be exempt.

Reduces paperwork for pharmacy teams and patients
Minimises the risk of error when recording exemption status
Speeds up the dispensing and claiming process
Improves data accuracy for NHS reimbursement

Pharmacy owners are encouraged to register for RTEC as soon as possible.

Full guidance and registration information can be found on the Community Pharmacy England website:

<https://cpe.org.uk/digital/rtec>

Prescription Item Reports (PIR): Monthly Payment Reconciliation Resource

Pharmacy owners can now access Prescription Item Reports (PIRs) each month via the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) Information Services Portal (ISP).

These reports provide a detailed breakdown of payments for NHS prescriptions and certain NHS services, helping pharmacy teams to:

- View a monthly breakdown of payments for individual products supplied
- Reconcile monthly payments against claims submitted for NHS prescriptions and services
- Investigate payment discrepancies and, where needed, request a prescription re-check
- Identify potential training needs to reduce endorsing or claiming errors

What the PIR includes

The PIR provides an item-level breakdown for each product supplied against NHS prescriptions and certain NHS services, including:

- Prescription form and item number/identifier
- Product description, pack size, and price used for reimbursement
- Quantity reimbursed and fees paid
- Dispenser endorsements (e.g. BB, OOP, SP)
- Charge status
- Prescriber code and partially redacted NHS patient number
- Service type (for non-prescription supplies)
- Unique claim serial number – shown as the Dispensed Item ID from your EPS IT supplier

Important: Only the last 12 months of PIRs are stored on the NHSBSA server. Pharmacy owners should download and save these each month to maintain a complete record of payments.

Services currently included in the PIR

- Pharmacy First Clinical Pathways Service
- Hypertension Case-Finding Service (including ABPM)
- Pharmacy Contraception Service

Upcoming additions:

- Influenza and COVID-19 vaccination data from September 2025
- Emergency Contraception Service data from its launch date

These services appear as 'B forms' within the report.

Accessing the PIR

To access PIRs, pharmacy owners must register by completing the 'Payment Information Registration Form (for authorised users)', available on the NHSBSA's Payment Information webpage.

Once completed, please email the form to:
cppricinginformation@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

Community Pharmacy England continues to support further enhancements to the PIR, including the use of additional EPS identifiers (e.g. token reference numbers) to support reconciliation and accuracy.

Violence and abuse towards NHS staff

Violence and abuse towards NHS staff, including physical violence, harassment, and sexual misconduct, is a significant and rising problem, with a 2024 survey showing 1 in 7 staff experienced physical violence and 1 in 12 experienced unwanted sexual behavior.

In response, NHS England has established policies, like the Violence Prevention and Reduction Standard, and some trusts have implemented new measures, such as warning systems and "Choose Kindness" campaigns, to support staff and hold offenders accountable.

Statistics

- Physical Violence:

In 2024, 14.38% of NHS staff reported experiencing physical violence from patients, relatives, or the public. This represents a slight increase from 2023.

- Harassment and Abuse:

Around 25.08% of staff reported experiencing harassment, bullying, or abuse from patients, service users, their relatives, or the public in the last 12 months.

- Sexual Misconduct:

8.82% of NHS workers experienced unwanted sexual behaviour, including offensive comments, touching, and assault.

- Discrimination:

9.25% of staff experienced discrimination, with over half of those incidents being based on their ethnic background.

- Highest Risk:

Staff in ambulance trusts report the highest levels of violence

Primary care teams can download [NHS Staff Respect | Help Us Help You - Primary Care Services | Campaign Resource Centre](#)

REMINDER: Register now for the Newly Qualified Pharmacists Programme Cohort 9 delivered by CPPE – apply by 31 October 2025

The Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) and NHS England (NHSE) Newly Qualified Pharmacist Programme (NQPP) is open for registration.

About the training pathway

This twelve-month programme is fully funded by NHS England WT&E to support newly qualified pharmacists to develop confidence and competence in the core areas of pharmacy practice. Educational supervision support is provided by CPPE as part of this training programme offer.

Key dates – Two Cohorts for 2025-26:

- Cohort 9
 - Applications opened 1st September 2025
 - Applications close 31st October 2025
 - Programme start date: 3rd November 2025
- Cohort 10
 - Applications open 12th January 2026
 - Applications close 20th March 2026
 - Programme start date: 23rd March 2026

Eligibility:

The CPPE Newly qualified pharmacist programme is for pharmacists (including locums) who registered with the GPhC from 2023 onwards who are working in any of the following settings as their main role:

- Community pharmacy
- Integrated care boards
- Community health services
- Health and justice
- General practice (Not for learners employed via ARRS)
- Care homes (Not for learners employed via ARRS)
- Pharmacists who registered before 2023 who are returning from a career break are also eligible to apply.
- Other roles may also be eligible – contact CPPE to discuss how they can support.

How can I apply?

- Visit the CPPE website www.cppe.ac.uk/career/nqpp/ for further information about the training offer provided including eligibility.
- A video overview of the programme is available here <https://vimeo.com/997723347/d44abee944?share=copy>
- If you have any questions regarding this offer, please contact the CPPE NQPP team newlyqualified@cppe.ac.uk.

Stay connected:

- Find out more on the NHS England WTE website:

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/pharmacy/transforming-pharmacy-education-training>

- Contact england.pharmacyteam@nhs.net for more information.

Reminder: Completion of the 2025 Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey

Pharmacy owners are reminded of the requirement to complete the 2025 Workforce Survey, which is a mandatory obligation for all community pharmacy contractors.

The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) issued emails to pharmacy owners in September 2025 containing a unique link to access the survey.

In some cases—particularly within multiple pharmacy groups—the survey may be completed centrally by a head office team. If you are unsure whether the survey should be completed at pharmacy level or by your head office, please check with your organisation for clarification.

The information collected is essential to help NHS England and wider partners understand workforce capacity, pressures, and future planning needs across community pharmacy.

Survey closing date: 11:59pm, Friday 21 November 2025

Please ensure the survey is completed before this deadline to remain compliant with contractual requirements.

Campaign Information

International Men's Day – 19 November 2025

International Men's Day (IMD) is marked annually on 19 November across the world, including in all four nations of the UK – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

The event provides an important opportunity to recognise and celebrate the positive contributions that men and boys make to their families, communities, and wider society.

IMD was first formally observed in the UK in 2010, and globally it began in 1999 in Trinidad and Tobago.

UK Themes for 2025

In the UK, International Men's Day focuses on three key themes, which organisations and individuals are encouraged to use as a guide when planning activities or discussions:

1. Making a positive difference to the wellbeing and lives of men and boys
2. Raising awareness or funds for charities supporting men's and boys' wellbeing
3. Promoting positive conversations about men, manhood, and masculinity

These themes offer a framework for recognising the diversity of men and boys and the unique challenges they face — including issues such as mental health, suicide prevention, homelessness, abuse, and violence.

Why It Matters

International Men's Day provides an opportunity to:

- Celebrate the achievements, contributions, and roles of men and boys in families, workplaces, and communities
- Encourage open discussions about wellbeing, relationships, and social pressures
- Highlight and support male health initiatives and community organisations working to improve men's physical and mental health

Get Involved

Everyone is encouraged to take part — men and women, boys and girls — to help promote positive role models, challenge stigma, and support a culture of equality and respect.

Organisations can mark the day by:

- Sharing resources and raising awareness on social media or noticeboards
- Holding wellbeing conversations or team discussions
- Supporting a local or national men's health charity

This is not a mandatory campaign

Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day 2025

Each year in November, people across the United Kingdom come together to remember and honour all those who have served, fought, and sacrificed in conflicts past and present.

Remembrance Sunday – 9 November 2025

Remembrance Sunday is held on the second Sunday of November, the Sunday nearest to 11 November, to commemorate the contribution of British and Commonwealth military and civilian servicemen and women in the two World Wars and later conflicts.

At 11am, a national two-minute silence will be observed at war memorials, cenotaphs, and places of worship across the country. Services and parades will take place in towns, villages, and cities, offering an opportunity for reflection and gratitude for the freedoms we enjoy today.

Armistice Day – 11 November 2025

Armistice Day marks the end of the First World War — when, on 11 November 1918, the guns fell silent at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

A two-minute silence is traditionally observed at 11am on this day to remember the moment hostilities ceased and to honour those who lost their lives in service to their country.

How You Can Take Part

- Join your local Remembrance service or parade
- Pause for the two-minute silence at 11am on both days
- Wear a poppy as a symbol of remembrance and hope
- Take time to reflect on the courage and sacrifice of those who served and those who continue to serve today

“At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.”

— Laurence Binyon, *For the Fallen*

This is not a mandatory campaign

Useful Information

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.

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.

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/>

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.

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.southwestcontrolleddrugs@nhs.net

Riddle of the Month

The answer to last month's riddle is because all the people on the boat were married - Well done to the team at Exminster Pharmacy! 🎉 for being the first to send in the correct answer

This month's riddle is

If all Wibbles are Ciggles, all Borkins are Kwumblins, no Hoggles are Borkins, and all Ciggles are Borkins, is it true that all Borkins are Ciggles?



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