



Community Pharmacy Bulletin



Date: 28 November 2025

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Headline News

Christmas & New Year Opening Hours

Final packs, to include pharmacy, dental and optometry hours, are due to be circulated to all interested parties including out of hours providers, GP practices and other primary care contractor's w/c 08 December 2025. Please ensure any amendments to your published hours are updated via Profile Manager no later than the 07 December 2025 to ensure these are captured and included in this circulation.

For contractors who will be opening on any of the bank holidays please ensure you update your hours via [Profile editor login - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#) so these times are reflected on your NHS.UK and DoS profiles.

Where pharmacies will be open on any of the bank holidays, please ensure pharmacists are reminded to have their Smartcard with them as this will be especially critical with more limited provision available on these dates.

Finally, we would like to thank all those contractors, and their teams, who have agreed to support over the festive period.

Adverse Weather Conditions

We are now entering the winter season where the country may be subjected to some extremely adverse cold weather with snow and heavy rain. If you find that you are unable to open due to adverse weather, then please ensure you report any temporary suspension of service as soon as practicable via one of the following ways: -

- via [Manage Your Service \(MYS\) portal](#).
- Completing the Temporary Suspension Form found [here](#) titled Annex 18 and sending this to england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net.
- Completing the SW Online Microsoft Form found [here](#)

As part of implementing your business continuity plan for the closure the following actions should be completed:

1. Update their directory of services (DoS) profiles via Profile Manager to show the temporary suspension of service.
2. Ensure patients are not referred to the pharmacy premises for directed urgent care services during the temporary suspension where practicable.
3. Notify other pharmaceutical service providers and GP practices about the suspension, and its anticipated duration, where practicable.
4. Display the necessary information to patients about the suspension, and its anticipated duration, in the approved manner, so that it is visible from outside the pharmacy (or for DSPs made the necessary changes to their website).
5. Ensure arrangements are in place for the continuity of patient care, including those patients with booked appointments or those attending the pharmacy regularly for the supervised administration of medicines. (Details on how to find your local Drug and Alcohol Support Service can be found under the Drug & Alcohol Services section of this bulletin).
6. Use all reasonable endeavours to resume the provision of pharmaceutical services as soon as practicable.

Local Health Campaign – Only Order What You Need (1–19 December 2025)

As part of the locally agreed public health campaigns, the ICBs have selected the **‘Only Order What You Need’** campaign to run from **01 December to 19 December 2025**. (This campaign excludes BNSSG and Dorset Pharmacies as the ICB’s for these regions have already run their campaign).

Each year, the NHS wastes approximately £300 million on unused medicines in England. A significant proportion of this waste is avoidable, often arising when patients routinely order more medication than they need. Every pound spent on wasted medicines is a pound less available for delivering vital NHS services.

On the 21 November all contractors should have received, campaign materials and instructions on how to participate in campaign

This campaign aims to raise awareness and promote responsible ordering of repeat prescriptions. We are asking pharmacies to:

- Encourage patients to review what medicines they already have before ordering more.
- Promote the message to only order what is needed.
- Empower patients to take control of their repeat prescriptions and to speak with their pharmacist or GP if their medication needs change.
- Raise awareness that unwanted medicines cannot be reused and should not be stockpiled.

Please note that this is a mandatory campaign, and all pharmacies are required to participate.

If you have any queries about this campaign, please contact the pharmacy team at: england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net

Thank you for your continued support in helping to reduce medicines waste and improve patient awareness across our communities.

High Flu Activity Reported Earlier Than Expected – Reminder for Eligible Adults to Get Vaccinated

Recent data shows flu cases across the UK have risen significantly, around a month earlier than usual. As a result, eligible adults are strongly encouraged to get their flu vaccination as soon as possible to ensure the highest level of protection.

Influenza is a highly contagious respiratory infection spread through droplets from coughing or sneezing, or through direct contact. Symptoms typically appear 1–4 days after infection and can include:

- High fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Fatigue

While most healthy individuals recover within 2–7 days, flu can seriously worsen underlying health conditions and lead to complications such as bronchitis or pneumonia, which may result in hospitalisation or, in severe cases, death.

Reducing the Spread to help prevent infection:

- Wash hands frequently.

- Wear a face mask in crowded indoor settings such as shops or public transport.
- Use tissues or cough/sneeze into the bend of your elbow rather than your hands.

People are typically infectious from one day before symptoms begin and remain so for around 5 days. Limiting contact with others for 3–5 days after becoming unwell is advised.

Why Vaccination Matters

Flu strains evolve quickly, so your immunity from past infections or previous vaccinations may not provide full protection. It is therefore important to receive the flu vaccine every year, ideally during autumn or early winter, before cases peak.

Frontline Staff

For frontline workers not eligible for a free NHS flu vaccination, employers are expected to have arrangements in place to ensure staff can access the vaccine.

Standards for revalidation reflective account set for 2026

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) have announced that from 1 January 2026, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians can select any of the nine Standards for pharmacy professionals for their revalidation reflective account. The same requirements regarding reflection against one or more of the standards are required.

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are currently required to select one or more of three standards chosen by the GPhC and give one or more examples of how they have met the standard(s) in their practice.

Expanding the standards which can be used for reflection will enable pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to focus on the specific aspects of their practice they consider to be most relevant. This change is part of a continuing review of the current revalidation framework.

Find out more at www.pharmacyregulation.org/pharmacists/revalidation-renewal

Dispensing Services Quality Scheme (DSQS)

Thank you, those dispensing practices who have returned their Self-Declaration Assessment.

A gentle reminder that the recommended deadline for the return of your Self-Declaration Assessment is **Friday 23 January 2026**.

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

Handwritten prescriptions

Following a recent incident, where the incorrect medication was supplied against a handwritten hospital prescription, we would like to stress the importance of extra vigilance when dispensing handwritten prescriptions.

If there is any doubt regarding which medication should be dispensed, or any uncertainty in relation to the dose or directions, it is recommended that the prescriber is contacted prior to a supply being made, to confirm the details.

NHSBSA Reminder: Accurate FP34C Item Declarations Required

The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) has identified a small number of pharmacies who have been consistently and significantly over-declaring the number of prescription items dispensed each month, when submitting their FP34C declarations via the Manage Your Service (MYS) portal.

In line with the Government's *Managing Public Money* requirements, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has decided that any pharmacy owner who persistently over-declares their prescription item figures will no longer receive an advance payment based on their FP34C declaration. Instead, their advance payment will be calculated solely using the actual number of EPS claims received by NHSBSA.

This update will appear in the November Drug Tariff, and any affected pharmacies will see changes to their advance payments from November 2025 onwards (beginning with the dispensing month of October). NHSBSA will contact any impacted contractors directly to inform them of this change.

Pharmacy owners are strongly reminded to ensure that their monthly item counts are accurate and submitted correctly. For further guidance [Changes to Advance payments for pharmacies that consistently over-declare items on FP34C - Community Pharmacy England](#)

Assessing the role of TARGET TYI leaflets for respiratory care in England's community pharmacies

A [study for the JAC-Antimicrobial Resistance journal](#) has looked at the use of TARGET - Treating Your Infection (TYI-RTI) leaflets across community pharmacies in England, through the Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS). These leaflets are designed to support healthcare professionals in delivering tailored conversations with patients about respiratory tract infection (RTI) symptoms. The study showed positive outcomes relating to the number of patients requiring escalation to the pharmacist and signposting to another healthcare provider. [Read the article.](#)

Further details of the progress community pharmacy teams have made in promoting AMS and tackling AMR through the Pharmacy Quality Scheme can also be found via [NHS England's website](#).

Ministry of Defence using paper FP10 prescriptions

The Department for Health and Social Care has agreed that from the start of next year the Ministry of Defence (MOD) will start using paper FP10 prescription forms for all outsourced prescriptions issued by MOD medical facilities. The small number of prescriptions outsourced in this way will be reimbursed by the MoD.

Pharmacy contractors should ensure their teams are prepared to process paper FP10s in line with standard NHS procedures. From 24 November 2025, a limited launch of the new arrangements will take place from 6 MOD sites and their usual outsourcing pharmacies. Further information can be found [on the NHS BSA website](#).

Hypertension Case-Finding Service

Pharmacy owners providing the Hypertension Case-Finding Service must ensure they have the appropriate equipment required for both stages of the service. This may involve purchasing or renting the necessary devices for each stage.

Where equipment becomes broken, lost, stolen, or otherwise unavailable, pharmacy owners should have arrangements in place to manage these situations. This includes maintaining insurance that covers accidental damage to either type of monitor, as well as theft of, or failure by a patient to return, the ABPM device.

Before delivering the service, pharmacy staff must obtain verbal consent from the patient and record this in the pharmacy's clinical record for the service. Pharmacy owners must also ensure that patients are informed that their information will be shared for the following purposes:

- Sharing relevant information between the pharmacy and the patient's general practice to enable blood pressure readings to be recorded in their GP practice record.
- Sharing service-related information with NHS England for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
- Sharing information with NHSBSA and NHS England for post-payment verification.

The Community Pharmacy England website provides additional information and resources around this advance service: <https://cpe.org.uk/national-pharmacy-services/advanced-services/hypertension-case-finding-service/>

Easter planning 2026

We are seeking expressions of interest from pharmacies who would be willing to support on any of the Bank Holidays over Easter, **03/05/06 April 2026**, to help extend the provision of pharmaceutical services to support Out of Hours.

If you can support, please complete the [Expressions of Interest Form](#) noting your intentions for all of the Easter Bank Holidays by **Wednesday 31 December 2025** please include the hours between which you could open on each date in the relevant section. Any help would be appreciated, especially on Easter Sunday, and there is payment associated with this which is as follows: -

- Easter Sunday 5 April 2026 **£391.45 per hour**
- All other Bank Holidays **£307.57 per hour**

Thank you to those contractors who have already completed an EoI for one or more of the Bank Holidays, we will be reviewing these in early 2026 and contacting those where support would be needed

Campaign Information

Human Rights Day – 10 December 2025

Human Rights Day is marked every year on 10 December to commemorate the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 — a landmark global commitment that sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that every person is entitled to, regardless of their background, identity, beliefs, or circumstances. The UDHR protects the inalienable rights of all people — rights that safeguard dignity, equality, and fairness across the world.

2025 Theme: Human Rights – Our Everyday Essentials

This year's theme highlights that human rights are not abstract concepts; they are woven into our everyday lives and shape the safety, opportunities, and freedoms we rely on each day.

Human rights are POSITIVE

They help create safety, dignity, and happiness in daily life — found in the food we eat, the air we breathe, the opportunities we pursue, and the protections that keep us safe.

Human rights are ESSENTIAL

They are a shared foundation that unites us across differences. In a world of uncertainty, rights such as safety, freedom of expression, and participation in society anchor our lives and strengthen communities.

Human rights are ATTAINABLE

Human rights start with everyday actions: treating others with respect, speaking out against unfairness, and listening to those whose voices may go unheard. While individual actions matter, true progress also depends on collective efforts from communities, organisations, and nations working together.

Why we mark Human Rights Day

This year's campaign aims to rebuild trust and engagement with human rights by showing how they are part of daily life. By connecting human rights principles with lived experience, the day encourages awareness, confidence, and collective action toward justice, dignity, and equality for all.

This is not a mandatory public health campaign.

International Day of Disabled People – 3rd December

The International Day of Disabled People, also known as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, is observed annually on 3rd December. This important day promotes awareness, understanding, and support for the rights and well-being of disabled individuals across the world. It also serves as a reminder of the need for continued progress towards a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable society.

History and Significance

First proclaimed by the United Nations in 1981, the day was established to advance the rights and dignity of disabled people. Originally called the “International Day of Disabled Persons,” the name was later updated to reflect person-first language, emphasising that individuals should always be seen as people *before* their disability.

The day highlights the social, physical, and attitudinal barriers that disabled people may face, while also celebrating their achievements and contributions to communities, workplaces, and society at large.

Purpose and Objectives

The International Day of Disabled People aims to:

- Promote the rights, dignity, and autonomy of disabled individuals.
- Raise awareness of the barriers that can prevent full participation in society.
- Encourage organisations, communities, and governments to take meaningful steps toward accessibility and inclusion.
- Celebrate the achievements, talents, and contributions of disabled people.
- Challenge stereotypes, stigma, and misconceptions surrounding disability.

This observance provides an opportunity for reflection, education, and positive action. It encourages all of us to work together toward creating environments—both physical and social—where every person can participate fully and equally.

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 ensure that 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 respond to your enquiry. Many thanks.

- Contact Name
 - Name of Contractor
 - ODS Code (F Code)
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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
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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 **01 of April 2025**.

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>
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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/>
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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 was False

This month's riddle is In Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," what was Scrooge's first name? 🧑🏻



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