

# Community Pharmacy Bulletin

Date: 27 February 2026

## Headline News

- Annual Complaints Return – Action Required by 30 April 2025 2
- Data Security & Protection Toolkit (DSPTK) 2026 – Community Pharmacy England Guidance 2
- Amendment to temporary suspensions approved particulars 3
- Promoting the Electronic Prescription Tracking Service (EPTS) via the NHS App 3
- Changes to Core Hours 3
- EPS Nominations – Update on Patient Consent and System Functionality 4
- What to do when a Pharmacy Ownership Changes (A note from GPhC) 5
- Reasonable Adjustment Flag – Upcoming Legal Requirement 5
- Dispensing Services Quality Scheme (DSQS) 6

## Campaign Information

- Mandatory Local Health Campaign 2: Promoting the NHS App 6
- Young Carers Action Day – 11 March 2026 7
- No Smoking Day – 11 March 2026 7
- International Women’s Day – 8 March 2026 8

## Useful Information

- GDPR email requirements 8
- Email Correspondence – Signature Details 9
- Serious Shortage protocols (SSP’s) 9
- DHSC medicine Supply notifications 9
- Medical Alerts 9
- Reporting a Temporary Suspension in Service 9
- Changes of director and/or superintendent pharmacist 10
- NHSBSA Hints and Tips 10
- Pharmacy Support for Health & Wellbeing 10
- Interpretation and Translation Services 10
- Contact Details and Further Information 11

## Contractor Noticeboard

- Improving the Visibility of Our Emails – We Want Your Input 11

## Headline News

### Annual Complaints Return – Action Required by 30 April 2025

Under the National Health Service (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013, all pharmacy contractors are required to submit annual complaints report to the local Commissioning Team as soon as reasonably practicable after 31 March, marking the end of the reporting year.

We will be coming out to contractors shortly and we will share a CPE template that can be used to send in your annual complaints return

You may also use your own template, provided it includes all required information listed below.

Your annual report must include:

- The number of complaints received during the reporting period
- The number of complaints determined to be well-founded
- The number of complaints referred to the Health Service Commissioner under the 1993 Act

Your annual report must also summarise:

- The subject matter of the complaints received
- Any matters of general importance arising from those complaints or from the way they were handled
- Any actions taken or planned to improve services as a result of the complaints

The annual report for the period 01 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 must be submitted by 30 April 2026 to: [england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net)

---

### Data Security & Protection Toolkit (DSPTK) 2026 – Community Pharmacy England Guidance – Action required by 30 June 2026

Community Pharmacy England has published updated guidance to support community pharmacy owners in completing the Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPTK) 2026. The Toolkit is used to make each pharmacy's annual information governance (IG) declaration and must be completed by Tuesday, 30 June 2026.

What's new in the 2026 Toolkit

- A new question confirming whether multi-factor authentication (MFA) is used with your clinical IT systems
  - Improved layout for easier navigation
  - Clearer question wording and enhanced pharmacy-specific tips
  - Previous year's answers displayed for many questions, allowing teams to quickly confirm accuracy or update where needed
  - Continued availability of the NHS Parent Organisation Code (POC) HQ batch submission feature, enabling owners of three or more pharmacies to complete a single submission for all premises
- Recommended next steps

We strongly advise logging in to the Toolkit as soon as possible and reviewing the guidance documents—starting with the Toolkit Completion: Overview – Five Steps Guide. If capacity allows, pharmacy teams should begin completing the Toolkit early.

Important reminder: - All mandatory questions in the Toolkit must be completed as part of a pharmacy's NHS Terms of Service to meet minimum information governance requirements

Pharmacy owners can now watch a recording of Community Pharmacy England's recent online workshop to help with the completion of the <https://cpe.org.uk/our-work/updates-events/our-webinars/data-security-and-protection-ig-toolkit-workshop/>.

---

## Amendment to temporary suspensions approved particulars

This is to give contractors advance notice of changes to the method of reporting temporary suspensions to their ICB.

Currently contractors can report via the Manage Your Service (MYS) platform or send an email notification to their ICB.

However, from 01 June 2026 MYS will be the only submission method and contractors must use it from that date. Once reported via MYS, contractors do not need to follow up with an email or further notification to their ICB.

The approved particulars will be updated on 01 June 2026 [to reflect this on the NHS England website](#)

---

## Promoting the Electronic Prescription Tracking Service (EPTS) via the NHS App

The Electronic Prescription Tracking Service (EPTS) is now available to help patients follow the progress of their prescriptions more easily. When enabled, EPTS allows patients to see the status of their electronic prescriptions directly within the NHS App, giving them greater visibility and reducing the need to contact the pharmacy for updates.

### What EPTS Offers Patients

- Real-time updates on where their prescription is in the dispensing journey
- Clear visibility of when a prescription has been issued, downloaded by a pharmacy, or is ready for collection
- Reduced uncertainty, particularly for patients managing repeat or time-sensitive medication
- Fewer phone calls to the pharmacy for status checks, helping free up staff time

### How Pharmacies Can Promote EPTS

We encourage pharmacy teams to highlight this feature during routine interactions with patients, especially those who frequently request updates about their prescriptions. Simple prompts such as:

- "Did you know you can track your prescription in the NHS App?"
- "If you use the NHS App, you can see when your prescription is ready without needing to call us."

### Why This Matters

EPTS supports smoother communication between patients, prescribers, and pharmacies. By empowering patients with timely information, it helps reduce frustration, improves transparency, and enhances the overall experience of accessing medicines.

If your pharmacy has EPTS enabled, please help spread the word so more patients can benefit from this helpful NHS App feature.

---

## Changes to Core Hours

Contractors wishing to reduce or redistribute the core opening hours of their pharmacy premises must first apply to the ICB. All core hour applications are decided by the NHS South West Pharmaceutical Services Regulations Committee (SW Committee).

Pharmacy owners have no right to change core opening hours, and this is not a notification process, they must apply for any changes. Consequently, applications to change core opening hours may be granted or refused. Applications are determined against the 2013 Regulations as amended, and if refused, the contractor may appeal the decision to NHS Resolution.

If a contractor wishes to maintain the total core opening hours of its pharmacy premises but change the timing of them or the days on which they are, they may apply to do so under paragraph 26(1), Schedule 4. On 23 June 2025, a second test was introduced at paragraph 26(2ZB) Schedule 4 and contractors are required to state in their application whether they wish their application to be determined on the basis of:

- The test in paragraph 24(1), or
- The new test in paragraph 26(2ZB)

As part of their application applicants are required to provide the information necessary to satisfy the SW Committee in respect of the test they are applying under.

For the test in paragraph 24(1), a pharmacy owner must ensure evidence is provided to show that the proposed change to core opening hours will either:

- maintain as necessary the existing level of service provision for the people in that area or other likely users of the pharmacy premises; or
- maintain a sustainable level of adequate service provision for the people in that area or other likely users of the pharmacy premises, in circumstances where maintaining the existing level of service provision is either unnecessary or not a realistically achievable outcome.

For the test in paragraph 26(2ZB) a pharmacy owner must ensure evidence is provided to show that the proposed change to core opening hours demonstrates that the proposed hours will:

- ensure that the people who are accustomed to accessing pharmaceutical services at the pharmacy premises are likely to benefit from the changes because, overall, they would be more likely to access those services at those premises during the proposed core opening hours than during the existing core opening hours.

Evidence could include, for example, changes to the local surgery hours, and the opening hours of neighbouring pharmacies, but provide as much factual information as possible about the needs of the pharmacy's patients – patient surveys, records of levels of use (prescriptions and requests for advice / OTC medicines sales). This is not an exhaustive list.

Recent appeal cases identify key evidence as benefits to the patients (with regards to the new hours), the distance from the pharmacy to nearby pharmacies, how patients could travel to them, the opening hours of them and the services those pharmacies offer.

To support this evidence applicants could provide survey data, for the hours they wish to change, to show how patients are travelling to the pharmacy and reason for their visit (e.g. dispensing services). Appeal cases can be found on the Primary Care Appeals decisions website here: <https://resolution.nhs.uk/pca-decisions/>

Please note that 100-hour pharmacies can only apply to redistribute core hours under 24(1) (if not already reduced under 26(2A)) or reduce core opening hours in line with paragraph 26(2A), Schedule 4 (or redistribute in line with that paragraph if already reduced).

---

## **EPS Nominations – Update on Patient Consent and System Functionality**

In November last year, it was highlighted concerns regarding Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) nominations and re-nominations being made without patient consent.

These issues were raised about certain IT system functionalities that appeared to enable automatic patient re-nomination, again without the patient's explicit request. These concerns were escalated to NHS England for review.

NHS England has confirmed that it shares these concerns and has written to pharmacy IT system suppliers to reiterate the requirements around patient choice and nomination handling. Their communication made clear that:

- Nominations may only be changed at the direct request of the patient.

- Pharmacies, GP practices, and system suppliers must not influence or manage a patient's nomination.
- Patients must remain free to change their nomination at any time and through any route they choose, including their GP practice, any community pharmacy, or the NHS App.

NHS England has advised system suppliers that:

- PMR systems must support patient choice and enable contractors to comply with nomination guidelines.
- Auto-nomination features must not be provided, as they undermine patient choice and breach the guidelines.
- PMR systems should not bulk-review PDS data against PMR records in ways that could influence nominations.

#### Next Steps

NHS England will shortly publish updated guidance for both pharmacy teams and IT system suppliers on:

- How nominations should be processed
- Appropriate access to EPS nomination information held within the NHS Patient Demographic Service

We will share this updated guidance as soon as it becomes available.

---

## What to do when a Pharmacy Ownership Changes (A note from GPhC)

Notify the GPhC within 28 days:

When the ownership of a pharmacy changes, the new owner must legally notify the GPhC within 28 days by submitting a change of ownership notification form.

Submit the form only once the sale is fully completed: The notification form must be fully completed and signed by both the previous owner and the new owner, and the relevant fee must be paid before it can be processed.

If this is your first pharmacy, nominate a superintendent pharmacist:

If the new owner organisation is an NHS Trust, body corporate, or limited liability partnership that does not currently own any other pharmacies, you will also need to nominate a superintendent pharmacist as part of the notification process.

If we do not receive the fully completed form within the 28-day timeframe, the pharmacy will be removed from the register. This means the pharmacy must close immediately and the owner will need to apply for restoration and pay the associated restoration fee before the pharmacy can reopen.

For further information and to access the change of ownership form, please visit the Change of ownership page on our website. [the Change of ownership page on our website.](#)

---

## Reasonable Adjustment Flag – Upcoming Legal Requirement

A new [information standard for the reasonable adjustment digital flag](#), published in December, requires all NHS, health and social care providers that are publicly-funded to be able to read, write and share reasonable adjustments via the National Care Records Service (NCRS) by 30 September 2026. Full details of actions which providers must take are detailed in the above information standard notice (ISN), its accompanying implementation guidance and this [summary checklist](#).

Providers whose software suppliers have already completed national registration, and onboarding will be able to use the software to access the reasonable adjustment digital flag (RADF). Alternatively, they can do so directly via the NCRS online portal.

All providers are advised to establish if their software supplier has registered their interest in the onboarding process for the digital flag by consulting NHS England's national [supplier interest list](#) or [Information about suppliers](#) (NHS Futures – requires login).

If their supplier's software isn't registered, providers should ask them to do so. Suppliers can use this link to register: [Patient Flag API supplier interest form - NHS England Digital](#)

Details of how to read and write reasonable adjustments via NCRS are here: [Guide to Using the Reasonable Adjustment Flag in NCRS – NHS England Digital](#)

Under the new information standard, providers must also ensure: all staff learn about reasonable adjustments using either their own training or the free national training, a person's reasonable adjustment entries are identified, recorded and reviewed regularly to ensure they reflect the person's current needs, ready for sharing via NCRS later this year.

More about RAs & RADF: [NHS England » Reasonable adjustments](#).  
Email NHS England's national RADF team: [england.radfproject@nhs.net](mailto:england.radfproject@nhs.net)

---

## Dispensing Services Quality Scheme (DSQS)

Thank you, those dispensing practices who have returned evidence for DSQS.

A reminder the deadline for all evidence to be submitted for DSQS is **31 March 2026**. You must ensure you have completed and submitted the following by this deadline:

- Clinical Dispensing Audit
- Self-Assessment Declaration Form
- DRUM Declaration Form (10% DRUMS target achieved)
- Reported any dispensary errors within the scheme year for the purpose of reviewing and learning

We will be sending out an email reminder to those practices outstanding any evidence in early March and mid-March. Please note we will **not** be chasing individual practices to submit evidence.

Failure to submit all the evidence required by the 31 March 2026 may result in the practice not receiving their DSQS payment.

### Campaign Information

## Mandatory Local Health Campaign 2: Promoting the NHS App

Campaign dates: 02–20 March 2026

Thank you to all contractors who completed the first mandatory local health campaign, "Only Order What You Need," during December/January.

We are now launching the second mandatory local health campaign, titled Promoting the NHS App, which will run from 02 to 20 March 2026.

This is a mandatory local health campaign selected by the local Integrated Care Board (ICB) in line with the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework 2025/26. All Pharmacies must participate for a minimum of 2 weeks, though continued promotion is encouraged.

1. Display and use campaign materials
2. Engage with patients
3. Share your experiences (optional) Unless you have received communication to state differently.

If you have any queries, please contact the pharmacy team at: [england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net)

**This is a mandatory campaign**

---

## Young Carers Action Day – 11 March 2026

Young Carers Action Day takes place on 11 March 2026, and this year's theme focuses on recognising the vital role young carers play in supporting family members and the importance of ensuring they receive the help, understanding, and opportunities they deserve.

Young carers are children and young people who provide care—often daily—for a parent, sibling, or relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or substance-related issue. Their responsibilities can have a significant impact on their education, wellbeing, and social development, making awareness and early identification essential.

Why this day matters

Young Carers Action Day aims to:

- Increase awareness of the challenges young carers face
- Highlight the support available locally and nationally
- Encourage professionals, including those in community pharmacy, to recognise signs that a young person may be taking on caring responsibilities
- Promote opportunities that help young carers thrive, including access to education, wellbeing support, and community services

How community pharmacies can support

Pharmacy teams are often well placed to notice when a young person may be taking on a caring role. On Young Carers Action Day, teams may wish to:

- Signpost young carers and families to local support organisations
- Offer a friendly, approachable environment where young carers feel comfortable seeking help
- Be mindful of the pressures young carers may be under when collecting medicines or supporting a family member

**This is not a mandatory campaign.**

---

## No Smoking Day – 11 March 2026

No Smoking Day, taking place on 11 March 2026, is an annual national campaign encouraging people who smoke to take the first step towards quitting. The day aims to raise awareness of the health benefits of stopping smoking and to highlight the support available to help individuals make a successful quit attempt.

Why this day matters

Smoking remains one of the leading causes of preventable illness and death in the UK. No Smoking Day provides an important opportunity to:

- Encourage people who smoke to consider quitting
- Promote the physical, mental, and financial benefits of stopping
- Raise awareness of local stop-smoking services
- Support individuals who may be thinking about making a quit attempt but are unsure where to start

How community pharmacies can support

Pharmacy teams play a key role in supporting people to stop smoking. On No Smoking Day, pharmacies may wish to:

- Start brief conversations with patients about quitting
- Signpost to local stop-smoking services or in-pharmacy support where available
- Highlight nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) options and behavioural support
- Encourage patients to take advantage of free NHS support tools and apps

## Key message

Even a single conversation can make a difference. No Smoking Day is an ideal moment to help someone take that first step towards a healthier, smoke-free future

## **This is not a mandatory campaign**

---

## **International Women's Day – 8 March 2026**

International Women's Day (IWD) takes place on 8 March 2026, providing an important opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women and to recognise the ongoing work needed to advance gender equality across all areas of society.

This global day is marked by organisations, communities, and workplaces coming together to highlight women's contributions, raise awareness of persistent inequalities, and promote actions that support fairness, inclusion, and opportunity for all.

### Why this day matters

International Women's Day aims to:

- Celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women
- Highlight inequalities that continue to affect women and girls
- Encourage organisations to reflect on how they support gender equity
- Promote positive change through awareness, education, and action
- Inspire communities to champion inclusion and challenge bias

### How teams can get involved

Pharmacy teams may wish to:

- Promote local or national events marking International Women's Day
- Reflect on how the workplace supports equality, inclusion, and opportunities for women
- Encourage conversations about the importance of gender equity in healthcare and beyond

## Key message

International Women's Day is a reminder that progress is possible when we work together. Recognising and supporting women—both within our teams and in the communities, we serve—helps create a fairer, more inclusive future.

## **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)
- 

## 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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>
- 

## 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](mailto: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](http://www.cdreporting.co.uk)  
The NHSE SW Controlled Drugs Team can be contacted at [ENGLAND.southwestcontrolleddrugs@nhs.net](mailto:ENGLAND.southwestcontrolleddrugs@nhs.net)

### Contractor Noticeboard

## Improving the Visibility of Our Emails – We Want Your Input

We are reviewing how we communicate with contractors and would really value your feedback on how we can make our emails clearer, more visible, and easier to action.

We know that inboxes are busy, and important messages can sometimes be missed. To help us improve, we would like to understand:

- What makes an email stand out to you?
- What subject-line wording prompts you to open and act on a message quickly?
- Are there particular formats, tags, or phrases that help you identify priority communications?
- Is there anything we could change in the way we structure or present information to make it easier to digest?

As the South West Collaborative Commissioning Hub, we are keen to refine the emails we send directly. While we cannot change the content or subject lines of emails that external teams ask us to circulate, we can improve the communications we produce ourselves — and your insight will help us do that effectively.

Please share any suggestions, however small. Your feedback will help us make clearer, more accessible communications that support you in staying informed and taking timely action.