

# Community Pharmacy Bulletin

Date: 28 May 2026

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### Pharmacy Nominations Can Only Be Changed with Patient Consent

The Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) Nomination Standards have been revised and set out clear requirements to protect patient choice when EPS is used. Patients must choose their own nominated dispenser, which they can do at any time, including via the NHS App.

Contractors must only change nominations at the patient's request, explaining how EPS works, recording the nomination changes promptly, and must not influence patient choice or offer inducements. They must have clear, auditable processes to show they are acting on behalf of the patient. Third party apps, or webpages supporting nomination changes must also follow these standards. [The Electronic Prescription Service \(EPS\) Nomination Standards](#)

We would like to remind all staff that a patient's nominated pharmacy **must not be changed without their explicit consent**.

Patients have the right to choose which pharmacy their prescriptions are sent to. This nomination can only be updated:

By the patient themselves, using the NHS App or by speaking directly with their chosen pharmacy; or  
With the patient's clear and informed consent, if assisting them in the practice or pharmacy.

A nomination cannot be changed at the request of a third party (e.g., family member, care provider, another pharmacy) unless the patient has provided appropriate consent or has a legally authorised representative. Changing nominations without consent may lead to complaints, delayed access to medicines, and potential data protection concerns.

Please ensure all staff remain vigilant and follow the correct processes to support patient choice

More information can be found [Respecting Patient Choice for Pharmacy EPS Nominations - Community Pharmacy England](#)

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### Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey

The results from the 2025 Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey that was available for completion between September 2025, and November 2025 are now available. A summary of the key findings can be found here: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/pharmacy/community-pharmacy-workforce-survey>

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### Community Pharmacy Assurance Framework (CPAF) 2026/27

The process and timeline for this year's Community Pharmacy Assurance Framework (CPAF) have been confirmed.

NHS England has confirmed that the screening questionnaire, comprising of 10 screening questions, will be available to complete on the Manage Your Service (MYS) portal throughout July and, if required, the full CPAF questionnaire will be available to complete on the MYS portal throughout October 2026.

CPAF is a requirement of the Terms of Service. All community pharmacies must complete the screening questionnaires before the required deadline (and the full questionnaire if selected to complete it). The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) will be providing further guidance in due course.

## Tackling Racism and Inequality in Pharmacy

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) has reaffirmed its commitment to tackling racism and discrimination within pharmacy by signing up to new shared principles on advancing workforce race equity in health and social care. These principles, coordinated by the NHS Race and Health Observatory and endorsed by nine regulators, set clear expectations for meaningful action to address inequalities and improve outcomes for both patients and professionals.

To support this commitment, the GPhC has published two key statements outlining how it will act across its regulatory functions and within the wider pharmacy sector:

- Anti-Racism Statement

This sets out a zero-tolerance approach to racism and confirms that regulatory action will be taken where necessary. It also commits to addressing systemic inequalities within pharmacy.

- Statement on Discrimination

This reinforces that fairness, equality and respect must underpin all pharmacy services and regulatory decisions. The GPhC has made clear that all concerns about discriminatory behaviour will be taken seriously.

Through these statements, the GPhC aims to:

- Lead by example as a regulator
- Support a fair, inclusive and respectful pharmacy workforce
- Ensure patients receive safe, equitable care

Pharmacy contractors are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these principles and statements, reflect on their own practices, and continue fostering inclusive, respectful environments for both staff and patients.

[GPhC: tackling racism and inequality in pharmacy requires “bravery, honesty and action” | General Pharmaceutical Council](#)

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## NHS Smartcards: important checks to keep systems working

Pharmacy teams rely on NHS Smartcards to access essential NHS systems. NHS England and Community Pharmacy England are asking all pharmacy staff who use Smartcards to carry out a few simple checks now to avoid disruption later.

Some older Smartcards will stop working from 7 May 2026, and others may stop working sooner if contact details or roles are out of date. Please ensure the following checks are completed:

Make sure your email address and phone number are recorded correctly on your Smartcard profile in Care Identity Management (CIM).

- NHS England or your local Registration Authority can reach you before a card or role expires
- You can use mobile phone self-unlock if your card becomes locked

Set up mobile phone self-unlock (strongly recommended)

If you enter your Smartcard PIN incorrectly three times, the card will lock.

You can unlock it yourself using your mobile phone — but only if you have registered for mobile self-unlock in advance. This avoids delays and the need to contact the Registration Authority.

<https://digital.nhs.uk/services/care-identity-service/applications-and-services/self-service/self-service-unlock-smartcard>

Some staff have Smartcard roles (also called “positions”) that are approaching expiry. If a role expires, it may affect:

- Access to NHS systems
- Ability to work across multiple pharmacy sites

If any role is close to expiry and still required, please contact your local Registration Authority to have it extended or updated.

Some older Smartcards are being retired by NHS England.

If the long number on the bottom right of your card begins with 04, 05, or 06, the card must be replaced. These cards have reached end-of-life and are expected to stop working from 7 May 2026.

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## Hantavirus: Important Public Health Information for Pharmacy Contractors

UKHSA has issued updated information following confirmed cases of Andes hantavirus linked to a recent cruise ship outbreak. While this is a serious infection, the risk to the wider UK population remains very low, and only one strain of hantavirus (Seoul virus, carried by rats) has ever been identified in the UK — and it does not spread between people.

Hantaviruses are carried by rodents such as mice and rats. They are found worldwide and can cause illnesses ranging from mild flu-like symptoms to severe respiratory disease. The strain involved in the current outbreak is Andes virus, which is associated with rodents found in South America and not present in the UK.

Most infections occur when people breathe in virus particles from rodent urine, droppings or saliva. Infection can also occur through cuts, the eyes, or rarely through rodent bites.

Person-to-person transmission is extremely rare and has only been documented with the Andes strain, and only after close and prolonged contact.

Hantavirus is not spread through everyday social contact such as being in shops, workplaces, schools or public spaces. Transmission requires sustained close contact, such as sharing living spaces or sitting next to an infected person on a long-haul flight.

Symptoms typically appear 2–4 weeks after exposure but can occur up to 40 days later. They may include:

- Fever and extreme fatigue
- Muscle aches
- Stomach pain, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea
- Shortness of breath or severe breathing difficulties

There is no specific antiviral treatment; care is supportive, often involving respiratory support in hospital.

UKHSA is:

- Monitoring and supporting British nationals returning from the affected cruise ship
- Conducting contact tracing across the UK and Overseas Territories
- Following up all individuals with potential high-risk exposure for 45 days
- Ensuring passengers from the ship isolate for 45 days as a precaution

The risk to the general public is very low.

There is no need for isolation, additional precautions, or public health restrictions for anyone not directly linked to the outbreak, Andes virus has never been detected in UK rodents.

Should people be worried about rodents in the UK?

The only hantavirus strain seen in the UK is Seoul virus, carried by wild and pet rats, and it does not spread between people.

Exposure is highly unlikely; contact tracing teams will directly notify anyone who may be at risk.

People who have only been in contact with a contact of a case do not need to take any action.

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## Update on Supplies Enquiries and Authorised Signatories

PCSE is planning updates to the online supplies ordering form. These changes are part of a wider set of system updates, so they will be released according to PCSE's broader implementation timetable.

Once live, the updated form will:

- Allow directors to be added as authorised signatories for ordering supplies, as intended.
- Bring all primary care professions onto a standardised process for sign-up and authorisation.
- Reduce unnecessary approval steps via ICBs, removing inappropriate administrative "traffic".

What to do in the meantime

If a contractor:

- Needs to add a director as an authorised signatory, or
- Has an urgent supplies order but cannot proceed because the authorised signatory cannot be updated,

They can contact the PCSE Supplies Team directly using the “Contact Us” form on the following page:  
<https://pcse.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/supplies-enquiries>

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## New Look NHS App: Key Changes Contractors Should Be Aware Of

The NHS App is being updated with a new, more intuitive design. Over the coming weeks, users will begin to see changes as the updated version rolls out. Those with automatic updates enabled will receive it first, while others will be prompted to update later in the rollout, which begins by the end of March 2026. Below is a summary of the main changes that may be helpful when supporting patients.

The redesigned home page makes it quicker and easier for users to access key services such as:

- Appointments
- Prescriptions
- Test results

Information previously found under GP Health Record has now been reorganised into clear health categories on the home page.

- Test results and other record information have been moved into core health categories for easier navigation.
- Consultation notes and events can now be found under ‘Appointment notes and other updates’ within the

Appointments section.

- Under ‘Book an appointment’, users can now select ‘Ask about a health problem’ to submit an online consultation to their GP.

- View and update personal details
  - Manage app settings
  - Review and update health choices
  - Manage health services for others (where appropriate permissions exist)
- Care plans are now located under ‘Personal details’ within the Profile area.

These updates are based on user feedback and aim to make the NHS App more intuitive, accessible and easier to navigate. Duplication has been removed, and services are now grouped more logically. Testing has shown that users are more likely to find what they need on the first attempt, and many describe the new layout as simpler and easier to use.

Watch a useful video about the New Look NHS App [latest video](#)

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## Participate in the 2026/27 Dispensing Services Quality Scheme

On the 29 May 2026, all dispensing doctors in the South West will receive an invitation to participate in the Dispensing Services Quality Scheme (DSQS) for 2026/27.

As in previous years, a dispensing practice which intends to participate in the Dispensing Services Quality Scheme (DSQS) needs to notify the commissioner of that intention by 1 July each year.

If your practice wishes to participate in the DSQS scheme for 2026/27 please complete the DSQS 2026\_27 Participation Confirmation Notice which will be attached to the communication, you will receive on the 29 May and return the form to us via [england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net) by no later than midnight 30 June 2026.

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## 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/>.

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### Contractor Guidance: Dispensing Obligations and Drug Tariff Pricing

Contractors are reminded that a pharmacy is not entitled to decline the dispensing of a valid NHS prescription on the grounds that the current Drug Tariff reimbursement does not cover the acquisition cost of the medicine. Under the NHS contractual framework, and in line with professional and ethical standards, contractors must ensure that patients receive the medicines prescribed for them. Financial considerations must not compromise patient care or delay access to treatment.

Where contractors identify that the Drug Tariff price is significantly lower than the actual market cost, they should report this to Community Pharmacy England (CPE). CPE will gather the necessary data, investigate the issue, and, where appropriate, submit an application to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for a price concession. This process exists specifically to support contractors experiencing exceptional purchasing costs.

It is essential to emphasise that pharmacies must not delay or refuse to dispense a prescribed medicine while awaiting the outcome of a potential price concession. Patient safety, continuity of treatment, and timely access to essential medicines must remain the overriding priorities. Contractors are expected to take all reasonable steps to obtain the medicine, liaise with the prescriber where clinically appropriate, and follow established escalation processes in cases of supply difficulty.

Refusing to dispense solely on the grounds of reimbursement level is not compatible with professional standards, the NHS contractual framework, or the duty of care owed to patients.

### Volunteers' Week: 1–7 June 2026

Volunteers' Week takes place from 1–7 June 2026, providing an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the millions of people across the UK who give their time, skills and energy to support others. This annual event shines a light on the vital role volunteers play in strengthening communities and supporting health and wellbeing.

The NHS is supported by around 2 million volunteers every year, contributing across hospitals, community services, charities, and local health initiatives. Their dedication helps improve patient experience, reduce pressure on services, and strengthen the connection between health organisations and the communities they serve.

Volunteers' Week is a reminder of the power of community action and the positive impact volunteers have across the health and care system. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the partnerships that help

**This is not a mandatory campaign**

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### Diabetes Awareness Week: 8–14 June 2026

Diabetes Awareness Week takes place from 8–14 June 2026, offering an important opportunity to raise awareness of diabetes, highlight the signs and symptoms, and encourage people to seek support if they have concerns about their health. With millions of people in the UK living with diabetes — and many more at risk — this week plays a vital role in promoting early diagnosis and improving long-term outcomes.

Community pharmacies are often the first point of contact for people worried about symptoms or managing long-term conditions.

During Diabetes Awareness Week, pharmacy teams can play a key role by:

- Supporting conversations about diabetes risk
- Signposting to NHS diabetes prevention and management services
- Encouraging people to recognise early symptoms
- Offering lifestyle advice around diet, physical activity and weight management
- Helping patients understand their medicines and monitoring needs

Pharmacies remain a trusted and accessible source of support for people living with diabetes and those at risk.

Raising awareness of common symptoms can help people seek help sooner. These may include:

- Increased thirst
- Frequent urination
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing wounds

Encouraging individuals to speak to their GP or pharmacist if they notice these symptoms can support earlier diagnosis and intervention.

Pharmacy teams can also use this week to highlight the support available for people already diagnosed, including:

- Medicines advice and adherence support
- Blood glucose monitoring guidance
- Healthy lifestyle information
- Signposting to structured education programmes
- Support for managing complications or comorbidities

These conversations can make a meaningful difference to patient confidence and long-term health.

Diabetes Awareness Week is an opportunity to reinforce the role pharmacies play in prevention, early detection and ongoing care. By engaging with the campaign, contractors can help raise awareness, reduce stigma and support people to take positive steps towards better health.

**This is not a mandatory campaign.**

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## World Blood Donor Day – 14 June 2026

World Blood Donor Day takes place on 14 June 2026, providing an important opportunity to recognise and thank the voluntary blood donors whose generosity helps save and improve lives across the UK and around the world. The day also raises awareness of the ongoing need for safe blood and encourages more people to consider becoming donors.

- Emergency care
- Surgery
- Cancer treatment
- Management of long-term conditions
- Support during childbirth

World Blood Donor Day is an opportunity to celebrate the individuals who give their time to help others — and to encourage more people to consider becoming donors. Pharmacy teams can play a meaningful role in supporting this national effort and promoting the value of donation within their communities.

**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.

## Contractor Supplies- PCSE

Contact the PCSE Supplies Team directly using the “Contact Us” form on the following page:

<https://pcse.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/supplies-enquiries>

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## 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](mailto: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/>

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## 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))

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## Reporting a Temporary Suspension of Service new change 01 June 2026

From 01 June 2026, the Manage Your Service (MYS) will be the only route to notify ICBs of temporary suspensions/closures and these changes will be made to the approved particulars.

[Manage Your Service \(MYS\) portal](#).

Please also remember to update DOS and NHS.UK straight away. Attached to this bulletin is a flowchart for you to put up in your pharmacy as a reminder of who to notify in the event of a temporary suspension.

From 01 June 2026, the Manage Your Service (MYS) will be the only route to notify ICBs of temporary suspensions/closures and these changes will be made to the approved particulars.

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.

Details of the South West Local Policy for Temporary Suspension of Service, and reporting requirements, can be found [here](#).

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## 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.

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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>
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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
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## Contact Details and Further Information

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

### Farewell to Nikki Holmes

This month we will say goodbye to Nikki Holmes. Nikki has been an incredibly valued colleague, and her contribution over her time with us has been truly appreciated. She has brought consistency, calmness, and a genuine commitment to supporting both colleagues and patients, and her work has made a real difference across the team.

Her knowledge, professionalism, and kindness have shaped the way we work, and she will be greatly missed both personally and professionally.

Although we are sad to see her go, we are also excited for her as she moves on to her next chapter. Please join us in thanking Nikki for everything she has done and in wishing her all the very best for the future.