

## Coronavirus - COVID 19

# Important Information for Community Pharmacies



Community  
Pharmacy Wales  
Fferylliaeth  
Gymunedol Cymru

CONTRACTOR NEWS

Contractors will be aware that CPW and Welsh Government have, in recent days, been engaged in detailed negotiations regarding changes to the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework necessary to enable community pharmacies to best contribute to the needs of the patient population across Wales during the current crisis caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The CPW Board has indicated that it is eager for the agreement which it reached with Welsh Government earlier today to be communicated to contractors as early as possible. This edition of *Contractor News* sets out the steps which, by agreement with CPW, the Welsh Government is taking immediately to reduce the impact of the new and increasing challenges community pharmacies in Wales face, as a result of the current COVID-19 situation.

To reduce pressure on community pharmacy teams we have agreed a wide range of measures that are set out in detail below. These actions will support community pharmacies to respond proactively as the situation develops, with a particular focus on preventing the spread of COVID-19 whilst the UK remains in the delay phase of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) action plan.

On 13 March, the Minister for Health and Social Services announced a range of measures to ensure the NHS is able to continue to provide care and support to the most vulnerable people in our communities and to support timely preparation for the expected increase in the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19. These measures included the relaxation of contract and monitoring arrangements for primary care practitioners.

For community pharmacies, this will mean all activity not directly related to our priorities to:

- Ensure patients continue to receive the medicines they need;
- Provide people with the advice and treatment they need to self-care for common minor ailments;
- Reduce pressure on other less appropriate NHS services; and
- Protect the health and wellbeing of community pharmacy teams,

will be suspended until further notice.

Specifically, the following **contractual changes** are being implemented with immediate effect.

### **Cessation of contract monitoring**

Other than in exceptional circumstances, all community pharmacy contractual framework monitoring visits by Local Health Boards are to be postponed until further notice (including any PPV visits). If they have not already done so, community pharmacies will not be required to complete the annual clinical and information governance toolkits relating to 2019/20.

### **Changes to specified essential services**

The requirement for pharmacies to undertake one local health board directed and one self-directed clinical audit are suspended until further notice (ie both for audits required in 2020/21 and also in relation to any audits yet to be completed in 2019/20). However pharmacies must, before the end of April, undertake a review of their business continuity plans with a specific focus on COVID-19 preparedness.

The requirement for community pharmacies to undertake a patient satisfaction survey (CPPQ) is suspended until further notice, again both for any questionnaires still required during 2019/20 and for 2020/21.

In relation to participation in Local Health Board public health campaigns, community pharmacies will not be required to participate in any health board determined campaign, other than prominently displaying appropriate materials and messaging related to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Community pharmacies must remove all other non-essential health show materials to ensure sufficient prominence is given to notices relating to COVID-19.

### **Community Pharmacy Quality and Safety and Collaborative Working schemes for 2020/21**

The Community Pharmacy Quality and Safety scheme requirements are suspended until further notice, however each community pharmacy will continue to receive a quarterly payment of £1,250 to support business continuity.

The Collaborative Working scheme is replaced for 2020-21 by a one-off payment of £1,500 to be paid to all pharmacies at the start of the financial year to support each community pharmacy to engage in business continuity planning with their LHB board and primary care cluster.

### **Advanced Services**

The Medicine Use Review (MUR) service is suspended as of 1 April 2020 until April 2021

This will release an estimated 70,000 hours of pharmacist time for priority services. The MUR service funding (estimated at £5.5m) will be returned to the

global sum and paid as an additional fee per prescription item dispensed. This fee will be payable to all pharmacies that confirm to the relevant health board, they provide a free delivery service to all people who are self-isolating or at high-risk if they contract COVID-19 in line with national guidance.

Free delivery will only need to be offered to people who have no other means of collecting their medicines from the pharmacy (for example with the help of family members or friends).

The Discharge Medicine Review (DMR) service has been shown to reduce readmissions to hospital and will therefore play a key role in reducing demand on other NHS services.

Accordingly, the DMR service will continue but, wherever possible, DMR service consultations should be undertaken by telephone.

### **Enhanced Services**

Enhanced service funding of £8.5m will be guaranteed in 2020-21 regardless of reductions in service activity as a result of COVID-19.

All enhanced services will continue with the exception of **the sore throat test and treat (STTT) service which will be suspended immediately.**

The Common Ailment Service, Emergency Medicine Supply Service and Emergency Contraception Service are critical to reducing demand on other less appropriate NHS services. Community pharmacies should, therefore, make every effort to prioritise their continued provision.

Where appropriate, all enhanced service consultations will be allowed and, wherever possible, should be undertaken by telephone with suitable arrangements put in place to ensure patients can access any medicines recommended by the pharmacist undertaking the consultation.

In addition to these contractual changes set out above, and in recognition of the challenges faced by community pharmacies and their staff in responding to the current situation and the additional costs this can have for businesses, a series of **additional measures** will be progressed alongside contractual changes. These include:

- A one-off increase in funding for community pharmacies of £1.5m payable in 2019-20 to support business continuity. This will be provided by way of a one-off payment equal to 7.5p for each prescription item dispensed in the period January to March 2020;
- Providing advice to Local Health Boards to extend commissioning of the Emergency Medicine Supply (EMS) service to all pharmacies with access to the Choose Pharmacy application. The EMS service will also be amended to take account of the greater flexibilities available to pharmacies to supply medicines in a pandemic situation;

- Developing guidance for pharmacies and general practitioners on operational changes to reduce footfall in pharmacies and support pharmacies to manage prescription workload more effectively, and to reduce the risk to patients, the public and pharmacy staff from COVID-19; and
- Producing a range of resources to support changing patient and public expectations and behaviours when visiting a pharmacy, either to collect their prescription or to receive advice and treatment from the pharmacist during a pandemic.

Please be assured that CPW will continue to work with Welsh Government to ensure, if necessary, further appropriate measures are taken promptly to support the essential work of community pharmacy teams.

The CPW Board remains incredibly grateful for the hard work and dedication of every community pharmacy team in Wales. The Board trusts that these measures will provide community pharmacies with the additional resource and capacity they need to manage the current challenges effectively and to continue to support patients and the public.

The Board has asked me to express its gratitude to every community pharmacist; pharmacy technician and member of the wider pharmacy team who it knows are already experiencing significantly increased demand at this time. Community pharmacy teams will, in the coming months, have a critical role to play in the NHS response to COVID-19.

CPW has also raised with Welsh Government the need to include community pharmacists in any testing of key workers when capacity for testing increases within Wales.

Coronavirus is a viral disease that can cause coughing, fever and difficulty breathing. Most cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) seem to be mild, however there remains uncertainty around its clinical presentation and it appears to be more severe in older people, those with weakened immune systems and some long-term conditions like diabetes or cancer. For up to date information on COVID-19 in Wales, Public Health Wales provides regular updates on the situation in Wales on its website [here](#). CPW is also creating a repository of COVID-19 information for contractors on our website [here](#)

**RUSSELL GOODWAY**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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