

Dear Colleague

COVID 19 – COMMUNITY PHARMACY: NHS MEDICINES DELIVERY SERVICE

Purpose

1. This circular sets out the arrangements for a new time-limited medicines delivery service to be deployed by the Community Pharmacy Network to support winter pressures, NHS remobilisation and our National Strategic Framework during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Background

2. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the community pharmacy network has demonstrated its resilience and adaptability to find new and innovative ways of working to support the NHS and ensure patients continue to have access to vital medicines and pharmaceutical care across our 1,258 pharmacies.
3. The pandemic has seen a greater demand from patients looking for their medicines to be delivered, extended beyond shielding groups. The majority of pharmacies have managed to maintain their existing deliveries to patients and while many pharmacy owners have sought to support additional deliveries during this time, the ability to increase capacity has been limited due to costs for both infrastructure and workforce.
4. The latest strain of the virus brings increased risk due to the nature of increased transmissibility. It's therefore important to reduce points of contact among the general population to help reduce infection rates in our communities. All community pharmacies are operating a patient queuing system to support physical distancing. Offering an NHS Medicines Delivery Service can help support the stay local, stay home message during this period

18 January 2021

Addresses

For action

NHS Board Chief Executives
Director Practitioner Services,
NHS NSS

For Information

NHS Directors of Pharmacy

Enquiries to:

Pharmacy Team
Pharmacy & Medicines
Division
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Email:

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Detail

5. A time-limited medicines delivery service for those most at risk will help to alleviate the pressures on the pharmacy network and wider NHS services. This cohort would include persons considered as shielding, all patients deemed to be at high risk (as per the NHS influenza vaccination criteria but excluding those aged 55-64), those self-isolating and those whom pharmacists' professional judgement would warrant such a service. It is envisaged that this will capture circa 1.5 million people across Scotland. Community pharmacy teams are asked to identify eligible patients and proactively offer the delivery service to them for acute and repeat medications. The service will also support those individuals or households who have been instructed to self-isolate through Test and Protect contact or a positive COVID-19 test.
6. The service will allow this cohort to stay at home and avoid unnecessary journeys (often on public transport) to community pharmacies, which may involve waiting outside in adverse conditions as a result of necessary COVID-secure ways of working. The service will also help community pharmacy teams to manage their workload and COVID risk from a reduced footfall.
7. Service development for Dispensing Doctor Practices is being considered and further information will be issued in due course.

Operations

8. The service will run for an initial three month period, starting 18 January 2021. It will support manageable timescales for delivery and allow for significant uptake. Deliveries should be undertaken by appropriately qualified members of the pharmacy team or a third party provider to meet existing regulatory and professional standards, retaining the essential two-way communication between the patient and the pharmacy team. Administration will be kept to a minimum, with delivery claims being made via electronic endorsement of prescription forms. Payment verification and counter-fraud checks will be determined as appropriate by NSS.
9. **Community pharmacies are advised to use the "Other" freetype endorsement field to claim for deliveries made or attempted under the service.** Two claim codes will be established – one for shorter distances (SDD) and one for longer journeys (LDD). A higher weighting will be applied to deliveries which require travel to greater distances when payments are calculated. This is applicable for any deliveries made to patient addresses over 10 miles from the pharmacy (i.e. a 20 mile return journey).
10. For each delivery made, the appropriate endorsement for the distance travelled should be applied once per prescription form, on the first item of each form. For example, if four items are delivered against two prescription forms, two endorsements would be made in total. .
11. As the network is working within existing payment system architecture, this **claim mechanism cannot be used for non-electronic prescriptions (HBP, Nurse**

forms etc), NHS Pharmacy First Scotland services or for instalments. Deliveries to care homes are excluded from this service.

12. The full service specification can be found at Appendix A

Funding and Payment

13. Scottish Government have agreed a fixed pool of £5m for the period January to end of March 2021. In addition, contractors who participate in this service shall receive a **one off payment of £1,460 per contractor for initial set up costs and to recognise the workload associated with point 10 above which cannot be claimed electronically. Please find attached at Annex B a declaration form for those who participate in the service.**

14. For each dispensing month, payments will be calculated based on endorsements submitted that month against a fixed funding pool.

15. **Payments will be made one month in arrears (e.g. January '21 delivery endorsements paid in April '21).**

Monitoring and evaluation

16. The service will be reviewed prior to the planned end date (end March 2021) to assess the need for any extension.

Consultation

16. Community Pharmacy Scotland have been consulted on the content of this circular.

Action

17. **NHS Boards are asked to:**

- **note the contents of this Circular**
- **copy the contents of this Circular to community pharmacy contractors on their pharmaceutical list and Health and Social Care partnerships**

Yours sincerely,



Alison Strath

Interim Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
Pharmacy and Medicines Division

Annex A – Community Pharmacy NHS Medicines Delivery Service: Service Level Agreement

1. Introduction

- i. A funded prescription delivery service for patients most at risk from poor outcomes following COVID-19 infection has been agreed between CPS and the Scottish Government, initially to cover the period from 18th Jan – 31st March 2021.

2. Service objectives

- i. The main aim of this service is to keep pharmacy teams and patients safe by reducing unnecessary footfall and use of public transport.
- ii. The service will also help to reduce the number of vulnerable patients having to queue outdoors in adverse weather as a necessary but unfortunate result of keeping the pharmacy environment COVID-secure.
- iii. The service is also intended to help pharmacy teams manage workflow

3. Service description

- i. The NHS Medicines Delivery Service is an optional, funded service put in place to support communities across Scotland through the winter period
- ii. The service can be offered to the patients listed at point 3.iii. below and is intended to cover prescription medication.
- iii. Eligible patients are as follows:
 - Those aged 65 and over
 - Those who have an [eligible health condition](#)
 - Pregnant women
 - Young and unpaid carers
 - Those in Shielding categories
 - Those who are currently self-isolating as per Scottish Government guidelines
 - Any others whom a pharmacist believes would benefit from the service

4. Service requirements

The community pharmacy contractor must have:

- i. A prescription medicine delivery SOP in place which takes into account COVID-19 infection control measures as per current government and NHS guidance
- ii. Adequate indemnity insurance in place to cover delivery activities
- iii. A team suitably trained to offer a prescription delivery service

5. Service operation

The community pharmacy team will:

- i. Identify any patients eligible for the service using the information available to them, assess whether they would benefit from a delivery and offer the service to patients proactively as appropriate

- ii. Respond to requests for the service from patients who are eligible, attempting to fulfil the request wherever possible. Proof of eligibility may not always be available. The Pharmacist should apply their professional judgement in these cases.
- iii. Ensure the service is accessible, appropriate and sensitive to the needs of all service users. Equal access to the service should be afforded to all eligible patients.
- iv. Apply their professional judgement to determine how urgently the patient requires a delivery
- v. Then deliver the prescription medication to the patient using either:
 - i. A team member (who could be a temporary worker) with a valid Basic or Standard Disclosure certificate
 - ii. A secure outsourced delivery method
- vi. Ensure that deliveries are made in accordance with regulatory and professional standards and guidance
- vii. Ensure that opportunities for the pharmacist to convey health information or advice to the patient and for the patient to ask questions about their health or medication are retained
- viii. Alert the patient to any failed delivery attempt.

6. Governance, record-keeping and data sharing

- i. The pharmacy contractor must maintain appropriate records to ensure effective ongoing service provision and to support post-payment verification. This should include, as a minimum, details of the eligible patients to whom a delivery was attempted or made under this service and the date of the delivery.
- ii. Any patient safety incidents should be dealt with in line with the contractor's own policies and regulatory standards. Records of any patient safety incidents should be kept.

7. Payment and evaluation

- i. Claims and payments will be made as per the detail in PCA(P)(2021) 01
- ii. This service will be subject to NHS Scotland Payment Verification processes and scrutiny
- iii. The service will be subject to evaluation, which the service provider must participate in as and when requested by Community Pharmacy Scotland or the Scottish Government.

Annex B – Community Pharmacy NHS Medicines Delivery Service: Declaration Form

TO BE COMPLETED, SUBMITTED TO PRACTITIONER & COUNTER FRAUD SERVICES AND RETAINED AS RECORD FOR POST PAYMENT VERIFICATION

Contractor Name

Contractor Code

Date of completion

I the undersigned contractor confirm that I have complied with all the requirements detailed in NHS Circular PCA(P) (2021) 1 relating to the community pharmacy NHS Medicines Delivery Service.

I hereby confirm that I :

Have in place all appropriate arrangements for the safe and effective delivery of medicines in line with NHS Circular PCA(P)(2021) 1

COUNTERFRAUD DECLARATION

I declare that the information I have provided is correct and complete. I understand that, if I knowingly provide false information, this may result in disciplinary action and I may be liable for prosecution and civil recovery proceedings. I agree that any overpayments identified through the post payment verification procedure may be recovered at a future date by the Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service. For the purposes of payment verification, I consent to the disclosure of information from this form to and by the Common Services Agency and the Health Board on whose pharmaceutical list I am listed, as a contractor and agree to co-operate fully with all payment verification procedures.

Signature:

Name:

Company position:

Date:

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY 5 MARCH TO:

Maria Coppola

Email: Maria.Coppola@nhs.scot

Practitioner & Counter Fraud Services
NHS National Services Scotland
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1 South Gyle Crescent
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