

Covid-19 Briefing for Community Pharmacy Teams

The purpose of this briefing is to share information and recommendations to support Business Continuity Planning in relation to Covid-19. Your support in continuing to provide essential front line services during this massive health care challenge is very much appreciated.

Key Principles

1. Keep the pharmacy staff protected by:

- Displaying the poster to deter patients from entering the pharmacy if symptomatic by downloading it from here: <https://pharmacies.nhsforthvalley.com/>
- Continuing to follow regular hand washing and other practical measures e.g. using own pens and sign prescriptions on behalf of patients
- Giving consideration to staff at increased risk.
- Following all national advice regarding travel.
- Considering appropriate distancing measures in the pharmacy and for deliveries as per Community Pharmacy Scotland briefing <https://www.cps.scot/news-insight/news/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Following Health Protection Scotland Guidance- Environmental Cleaning in Primary Care: <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-primary-care/>
- Considering whether using a consultation room is appropriate

2. Communications

- Ensure you have robust systems in place to enable access to your NHSmail shared mailbox and e-mails. Please check regularly for updated information. If you need help please contact: FV-UHB.communitypharmacysupport@nhs.net.
- Follow due procedure for notifying a pharmacy closure in the meantime.
- As part of mobilisation the community pharmacy development team will ask you to email FV-UHB.communitypharmacysupport@nhs.net on a daily basis to advise whether your pharmacy is open or closed. This will be triggered when closures start to become apparent and you will be notified by email.
- The Community Pharmacy Development Team will produce updated briefings and add to NHS Community Pharmacy Website regularly over the following weeks and months.
- Check HPS, NHS Inform and NHS Forth Valley Community Pharmacy websites daily for updates.
- GPs have been advised **not** to change their current prescribing quantities or reordering processes
- If you require further information or have any concerns please do not hesitate to e-mail any queries to FV-UHB.communitypharmacysupport@nhs.net. If urgent please annotate subject heading with COVID-19 URGENT

3. Maintaining community pharmacy services

Covid-19 Briefing for Community Pharmacy Teams

- Due to the risk of staff absence, please continue to review risks and how to manage them through your business continuity plan. For example consider closure or a reduction in hours to complete routine work and direct acute prescriptions elsewhere. Is it feasible to explore with neighbouring pharmacies potential joint working, sharing staff or workload?
- Please ensure efficient and effective communication with your local GP Practice and other pharmacies if closure is pending. Display a notice to direct patients to the nearest open pharmacies.
- NHS Forth Valley is engaged with Community Pharmacy Forth Valley (CP-FV) in planning for cluster working as an option if pharmacy closures rise to a significant level. Staff mobilisation from other areas is also being explored.
- Please raise any concerns with the CP Development Team at the earliest opportunity.

4. Specific Situations

- **Alcohol & Drug Services**

Emergency plans are evolving for this pandemic including contingencies for prescription management and details will follow. Patients are receiving holistic risk assessments to determine if supervision can be relaxed and/or collection frequency can be extended. Nominated representatives are being identified to support collection for patients in isolation. The service will update you regarding any changes by Thursday 19th March at 5pm as the situation develops. Contact details are attached.

If you are concerned about capacity to provide supervision then please email

FV-UHB.communitypharmacysupport@nhs.net with COVID19/OST in the subject heading.

- **Mental Health Services & clozapine**

Community Mental Health teams in liaison with the Mental Health Clinical Pharmacy Team are working to support continued community dispensing. For patients in self isolation, a nominated representative may be able to collect a prescription. If a patient is in isolation but requires a blood test for continued clozapine validity, a careful risk assessment will be undertaken on an individual basis and the plan communicated. If Pharmacy closures occur then dispensing of clozapine will resume from FVRH. Contact details are attached.

- **MDS**

Health and Social Care Partnerships are actively looking at solutions to minimise the need for new and existing MDS. You may wish to consider increasing the number of MDS issued to a patient at any one time or review the need – this is a patient specific decision and your professional judgement should be used. A risk assessment should be completed for these patients in collaboration with their GP.

- **Delivery Patients**

During this time there may be an increased demand for deliveries. Staff safety is of the utmost importance. In some situations it may be necessary for the driver to ring the doorbell, leave the medication at the door, stand 2 metres away and ensure the patient collects the medication. Community Pharmacies should regularly reassess and liaise with prescribers if delivery/collection is not possible.

Covid-19 Briefing for Community Pharmacy Teams

- **Hepatitis C**
Services are working on plans to support community pharmacists and continued medicine supply to these patients
- **Self –isolation (including high risk groups)**
Services and partnership organisations are working on plans to support collection and delivery of medicines.
- **Specials**
An amended process has been put in place to help ensure that Community Pharmacists are able to obtain Specials for their patients where clinically required with the minimum of bureaucracy. We will keep the interim process under review as the situation with COVID-19 develops and issue updates when necessary. The amended process documents will be issued to the NHS Shared Mailboxes for each Community Pharmacy. Please check your shared mailbox for the latest information whenever you receive a prescription for an unlicensed Special.

General Information

Ensure that you:

Update telephone contact details for vulnerable and high risk patients.

Seek professional support from your superintendent pharmacist or GPhC

In the event of a medicine shortage please do not contact FVRH Dispensary – follow normal medicine shortage protocols: <https://pharmacies.nhsforthvalley.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/07/FV-Supply-Issues-Process-Flowchart-Community-Pharmacy-Dec-2018.pdf>

Regularly check the Health Protection Scotland and NHS Inform websites for the most up to date information as follows:

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

Sincere thanks to everyone working in community pharmacies across Forth Valley to support the healthcare system.