

## **Covid-19 Briefing for Community Pharmacy Teams**

8<sup>th</sup> April 2020

### **Shielding High Risk Patients**

The Scottish Government have identified and issued letters to all seven groups of patients at the highest risk of severe morbidity and mortality from COVID-19. Work is being undertaken locally to identify any further patients who need to be shielded and ongoing for those newly diagnosed. A second letter on the available support will be issued this week.

If you are contacted by a patient (or their representative) from anyone who has received a Shielding letter, we would advise the following:

- Flag the PMR record for the patient with a note that they are a high-risk Shielding patient.
- Take Shielding status into account when prioritising delivery or other services.
- Check your generic mailbox for ongoing local information and further updates.

For more information please refer to the email sent by Prescribing Support Team on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and the [Health Protection Scotland](https://www.healthprotection.scot.nhs.uk/) website.

### **Diverting Phone Lines: Suggested strategy to help manage workload**

You might want to consider diverting the pharmacy telephone number to a mobile phone if you have a member of the team unable to attend work but able to field calls remotely. This could include triaging calls, answering queries (within their competence) and collecting details of queries which can then be emailed/called into the pharmacy once or twice daily. This might take some pressure off the pharmacy and allow a person not at work to continue to support the team remotely. Any decisions on this process should be firstly be discussed with your superintendent pharmacist and/or area manager.

### **Patient Returned Medicines**

We have heard reports of community pharmacies refusing patient returned medicines due to perceived concerns that staff may contract COVID-19 from handling these medicines. When accepting returned medicines staff should follow normal SOPs while following social distancing guidance. It would be appropriate to use PPE e.g. gloves when handling returned medicines and follow normal good hand hygiene guidance after touching medicines. Any returned controlled drugs should be processed in the normal way. Refusing to accept patient returned medicines poses a potential patient safety risk and depending on circumstances could be emotionally distressing for an individual to be asked to store these at home for a prolonged period of time.

More information can be found here: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-infection>

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### **PGDs - Supply of Paracetamol for Fever Associated with Coronavirus**

Two PGDs were circulated to your Shared Mailbox on Friday 3rd April and are also available on the home page of the Forth Valley Community Pharmacy Website. There is a new option, 'COVID-19 – Pharmacy Supply', available on the UCF section of your PMR which should be used when supplying Paracetamol for fever associated with Coronavirus. If you have any questions about your PMR, please contact Suzanne MacCrimmon (suzanne.maccrimmon@nhs.net).

### **Contingency Planning**

The community pharmacy development team have been working to agree a process for redeployment of NHS staff. The process that should be followed can now be found on our [website](#). It is extremely important should a community pharmacy require support the process is followed. Please access the website for further details.

### **Humanitarian Hubs**

As part of our response to COVID-19, we are working in partnership with Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk Councils to ensure patients who are vulnerable, elderly or at-risk can still obtain their medicines. More information on this will be sent to your shared mailbox this week. For further information please read the attached circular [PCA\(P\)\(2020\)07](#)

### **PPE**

An initial delivery of facemasks will arrive in community pharmacies later this week via Alliance and a letter from the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer is expected soon that will provide further detail. You may be aware via social and local media of projects that are producing PPE which can be accessed by community pharmacies- however it is acknowledged the PPE may not meet the required safety standards.

### **Clozapine**

Any patient prescribed clozapine should be advised if they have flu like symptoms to seek urgent medical advice as this could be a side effect of medication (neutropenia) rather than flu like illness or Covid-19. They should inform the doctor they speak to that they are taking clozapine. As an additional precaution, the community mental health team will be contacting patients weekly to check on their progress.

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### **Supervision of Opiate Substitution therapy (OST)**

Some pharmacies have relaxed supervision to keep teams safe and manage workload. You must ensure you are communicating any changes with the prescriber/service. The substance services continue to review patients and for those at high risk you may see **the following on a prescription:**

**“Further relaxation of supervision or instalment dispensing is not safe for this patient”**

This indicates the prescriber has risk assessed the patient and requires supervision to be maintained for patient safety.

If you are unable to meet these requirements please advise the prescriber/key worker who will find seek an alternative solution.

### **Naloxone**

Your continued support of the Take Home Naloxone framework and holding of Emergency Naloxone is critical at this time. Please continue to check your patients have a complete, in date naloxone kit and they know how to administer this in an emergency. For the most vulnerable patients who may not be able to come to the pharmacy to get their medicine, a naloxone prescription will be issued for them by their service. This will be collected by a nominated buddy or CADS nurse with a volunteer. Kindly ensure the dispensed Prenoxad® is given to the individual collecting the OST. Prenoxad® is available through Alliance Healthcare or if you are an Injecting Equipment Provision pharmacy - through Frontier online.

### **Collection of OST by CADS/CGL**

We have been made aware that the drug and alcohol services are coming to community pharmacy with paperwork to sign when collecting medication. Services have been strongly advised to cease this practice and that the pharmacy is under no obligation to comply. We do however ask that you continue to seek identification from those collecting; seeking I.D. where possible and NMC numbers or similar and document as part of your record keeping.

### **Practitioner and Counter Fraud Services (P&CFS) Contact Details**

As most of the NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) staff are now working from home, we would encourage community pharmacies, where possible, to send ePharmacy, prescribing, pricing, payment or endorsing queries by e-mail for the foreseeable future. A list of contact information can be found at <https://nhsnss.org/services/practitioner/pharmacy/contact-us/>. Please remember that patient identifiable information should never be sent out with NHSmail. If in any doubt, contact the IM&T Facilitator, Suzanne MacCrimmon (suzanne.maccrimmon@nhs.net or 07920294443), who will help get your query to the right person or department.

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### **The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS)**

The RPS has made the MEP and other useful pharmacy guides available and accessible to everyone during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can access these guides here:

<https://www.rpharms.com/about-us/news/details/MEP-and-our-most-popular-Pharmacy-Guides-now-available-for-whole-profession>

### **Security**

The Police Scotland Community Safety Team have issued the following statement:

*“Police Scotland is looking to offer reassurance to all pharmacy staff of our continued support in relation to their wellbeing and that any aggressive behaviour / verbal abuse or physical assaults should not be tolerated.*

*With this in mind could you please let us know if you are experiencing any of the above instances whilst at your place of work from members of the public who are in attendance for any pharmaceutical service. I am fully aware that social distancing measures and queuing times may be of issue particularly at locations with high footfall”.*

Please contact Police Scotland via the normal method of 101 if non urgent and 999 in an emergency.