

Community Pharmacy COVID-19 FAQs

I can't continue to operate my current service and/or I need to work behind closed doors to catch up and clean – what should I do?

- NHS Forth Valley has an interim opening hours policy in place. This allows you to close for an hour at both ends of your established working day and also for an hour at lunch time.
- Please inform NHS Forth Valley of any changes by emailing: FV-UHB.communitypharmacysupport@nhs.net. Remember to display a sign in your window informing members of the public of the change in opening times and let your local GP practices know.
- If you need to close beyond the interim opening hours or feel you need to close your pharmacy completely then please email us as soon as possible so we can work together to agree a solution.

Can I reduce the Community Pharmacy Services I make available to patients?

- NHS Forth Valley acknowledges that during the COVID-19 pandemic, community pharmacies are experiencing increased work load and work force pressures and as a result may have to reduce/stop core services.
- Community Pharmacy Scotland (CPS) advises that the main focus should be on dispensing, supplying gluten-free foods and the Minor Ailments Service (MAS).

My local GP practice is operating with reduced staff and can't support me with information/queries – what should I do?

- All services within the primary care network are under immense pressure at the moment. You must use your own professional judgement to make decisions that are in the best interests of your patient.
- For support you could contact your pharmacy superintendent, a peer, another professional person or CPS.
- It is important that you clearly document information that has been considered in your decision making process.

What is happening with Drug and Alcohol patients?

- NHS Forth Valley released a communication on the 19th of March. You can read this and any further updates on the Community Pharmacy Forth Valley website here: <https://pharmacies.nhsforthvalley.com/>

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Opiate Substitution Therapy (OST) nominated buddy list - when will this arrive and what if the buddy changes?

- This list should be with you now- apologies for the delay in getting this to you. The information provided to you is for **the nominated buddy**. Any additional information has been populated by the service and may indicate patients who have been risk assessed for changes to their collection frequency as this situation develops. Should you wish to adopt any changes to the frequency of collection or supervision we would ask you communicate with the prescribing service so they are aware.
- If the nominated buddy changes for any reason we will be unlikely to communicate this with you due to resource pressures. We ask you to exercise your discretion and professional judgement and if necessary seek clarity from the prescribing service or patient via phone.
- For our more vulnerable patients this may change to a nurse or volunteer service who should have photo I.D. If possible we ask that you liaise with them to ensure they can carry out their duties as quickly as possible. If you can indicate a preferred time of day for collection that would be much appreciated.

Controlled Drug prescriptions for these patients - can I dispense and supply it if it is not legal i.e. I am being asked to change the collection day or frequency of collection?

- CADS will not be able to issue new prescriptions for patients at this time due to the ever changing situation and resource pressures. As a result you will be asked by the prescriber or key worker to change the frequency of collection and /or collection day.
- Pharmacists are encouraged to use their professional discretion to dispense CD prescriptions that may not technically be legal. This statement from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society on the CP Scotland website should support your decision making:

“We are very pleased to see this statement from GPhC which reassures pharmacists that they have a flexible approach to regulation and encourages use of professional judgement in the best interests of patients. Sometimes there are circumstances where you can't follow normal procedure. This is fine provided what you do has been thought through, can be justified professionally and is then properly recorded. For RPS Members - The MEP and a quick reference guide to Professional Judgement gives helpful support and guidance on how to think through the professional decision making process. Updates and links to the latest guidance on the Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) are available on our website [hub page](#) which also has the contract details for the confidential support helpline for any queries on practice issues or wider matters.”

- Pharmacists should be satisfied that the prescriber's intention is clear and ensuring at this time patient care is not compromised.

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- Pharmacists should be documenting these communications in the most appropriate way, e.g. on the PMR and annotating Covid-19 on the prescription. It is essential the prescriber's intentions are communicated to all of the team including locums to ensure continuity of care and to prevent duplication of doses.

What if a patient has had their OST dispensed for Saturday /Sunday and the police attend to collect their weekend dose?

- Advise the police that the medication has been already dispensed and you are unable to re-dispense. Before restarting the patient's prescription (if within the 3 day window) you must contact the prescribing service to find out if any adjustments need to be made. You may also need to adjust the collection day if the patient has additional doses at home.

Can I supply EHC to a patient when they are not present?

- Yes – it is acknowledged that during the COVID-19 pandemic there may be circumstances where the supply of EHC cannot be made in person. The pharmacist should make an assessment of any such requests and make full use of the EHC PGD and their own professional judgement.

Does a patient have to be present to use the Pharmacy First service?

- No – it is acknowledged that during the COVID-19 pandemic there may be circumstances where a Pharmacy First consultation cannot take place face to face. The pharmacist should make an assessment of any such requests and make full use of any PGDs and their own professional judgement.

Minor Ailment Service (MAS) – who is now eligible?

- MAS has now been extended to anyone who is registered with a GP practice in Scotland on a permanent basis or who is registered with Defence Medical Services. It should be noted that residents of care homes and people who are registered with a GP practice on a temporary basis are not eligible for MAS. The patient still needs to be registered and every new patient who historically could not access MAS should be registered as having a War Pension exemption certificate (Exemption F). All claims should be submitted electronically via PMRs as normal. You can find further information on extended MAS here: [https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/pca/PCA2020\(P\)06.pdf](https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/pca/PCA2020(P)06.pdf)

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Can I supply Monitored Dosage System (MDS) patients with more than one week of medication at a time?

- Yes - 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. Professional judgement should be used taking into account both drug suitability/ stability and patient suitability/need. A risk assessment should be completed for these patients in collaboration with their GP.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- PPE – Gloves and aprons have been delivered out to every community pharmacy in Scotland. These are for the purposes of deep cleaning. The World Health Organisation (WHO) have issued interim guidance on the use of PPE: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331498/WHO-2019-nCoV-IPCPPE_use-2020.2-eng.pdf

Instructions for deep cleaning can be found here: <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-primary-care/>

COVID-19 testing for staff

Can I get tested for COVID-19? Yes- if you or a staff member is displaying symptoms or have a family member displaying symptoms then testing is available to you.

How do I arrange to get tested? Send an email to: [FV-UHB.Publichealth- healthprotection@nhs.net](mailto:FV-UHB.Publichealth-healthprotection@nhs.net) and copy in the Community Pharmacy Development Team (CPDT): [FV-UHB.Communitypharmacysupport @nhs.net](mailto:FV-UHB.Communitypharmacysupport@nhs.net)

What details do I need in the email? You need to include:

- The name of the person requiring a test
- Address
- Contact phone number
- Date of birth
- Job Role
- Impact their absence will have on your pharmacy's ability to deliver services

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How can I minimise risk of COVID-19 transmission within/outside my pharmacy?

- Please refer to the joint letter issued by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) , Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK) and the pharmacy regulatory bodies across the UK: <https://www.rpharms.com/Portals/0/RPS-SocialDistancing-Letter-002.pdf>
- Discourage patients to wait in groups for the pharmacy to open – ensure you have clear signs advising social distancing.
- Discourage patients to wait in the pharmacy for prescription and consider measures such as texting to advise when scripts are ready for collection.
- Restrict the number of people entering the pharmacy at any one time.
- Tape marks on floor to highlight 6 feet/2 metre safe distance from the counters and from each other.
- Consider all available options to protect your teams – for example Perspex screens, visors etc.
- Regularly clean counters and any waiting areas as viruses can settle on hard surfaces and remain infectious.
- Ensure staff wash hands/use alcohol hand gel regularly.
- Reduce access to the consulting room- only use when absolutely necessary and ensure it is cleaned after any use.

Where can I get further help and guidance?

Email

The Community Pharmacy Development Team – FV-UHB.communitypharmacysupport@nhs.net
Community Pharmacy Scotland – enquiries@CPS.Scot

Websites

NHS Forth Valley Community Pharmacy Website <https://pharmacies.nhsforthvalley.com/>
Community Pharmacy Scotland Website <https://www.cps.scot/>
NHS Inform <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>
Health Protection Scotland <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/>
GPhC <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/contact-us/coronavirus-latest-updates>