

An electronic copy of this letter and all other relevant guidance from NHS England and NHS Improvement can be found at: www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/primary-care/

4 November 2020

Dear colleagues

As the NHS continues to respond to this pandemic, we want to offer our ongoing gratitude for the commitment and support that you and your teams have shown. Over recent weeks there has been a sustained increase in community transmission of COVID-19 in England. The Government has announced new [national restrictions](#) in response to increasing transmission of COVID-19 for England for the period 5 November 2020 to 2 December 2020.

Home delivery of medicines and appliances during the COVID-19 outbreak

[New advice](#) has been issued to those who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19. There are two new groups that have been identified:

- adults with Stage 5 chronic kidney disease
- adults with Down's syndrome.

NHS trusts and general practices respectively will be adding patients from these groups to the shielded patient list. The need for children and young people to stay on the list will also be reviewed considering individual circumstances. The Summary Care Record will be updated accordingly.

People who are clinically extremely vulnerable will be advised by the Government not to go to a pharmacy. The Community Pharmacy Home Delivery Service and the Dispensing Doctor Home Delivery Service will be commissioned in accordance with the [Home delivery of medicines and appliances during the COVID-19 outbreak: service specifications and guidance](#) for all patients on the Shielded Patient List in England from 5 November 2020 until 3 December 2020. This means that all pharmacies and dispensing doctors in England will again be required to ensure patients on the Shielded Patient List receive their medicines at home.

Updated standard operating procedure

The [Standard operating procedure \(SOP\) for community pharmacy](#) in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19) was updated on 26 October 2020. It includes information about changing opening hours, working behind closed doors at times of extreme pressure and on NHS Test and Trace. If a pharmacy needs to temporarily close or change opening hours, please remember that from 9 November 2020 it is a requirement to update NHS 111 DoS and NHS website profiles to reflect this. Please contact your NHS England and NHS Improvement regional team if there is likely to be any disruption to provision of pharmaceutical services.

Signing of prescriptions for prescription charge exemption

From 1 November 2020, the need for patient signatures on prescription, dental and general ophthalmic services forms has been temporarily suspended until 31 March 2021. Contractors are asked to confirm a patient's eligibility for free prescriptions and mark this on the FP10 form or EPS token, on behalf of the patient. Patients should continue to be asked to produce evidence of entitlement or the FP10 or EPS token can be marked with 'evidence not seen'.

Community pharmacy webinar – Thursday 12 November, 6pm-7pm

Community pharmacy teams across England are being invited to register to join the next national webinar with Dr Keith Ridge, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, Director of Primary Care Ed Waller, and senior leads from the NHS England and NHS Improvement flu team and from NHS Test and Trace. Please [register online](#) and we will share the details with you.

Kind regards



Ed Waller
Director of Primary Care



Dr Keith Ridge CBE
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for
England