



# COVID-19 Update

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

This new, daily update contains important information for community pharmacy teams about the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Pharmacies to be required to open on Good Friday and Easter Monday

On the evening of 1st April, in the COVID-19 Primary Care Bulletin email, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) stated: "pharmacies will need to be open on Good Friday and Easter Monday as part of the wider NHS response to the pandemic". Since then we have been pressing NHSE&I for urgent confirmation on this matter so that pharmacies can meet any changed requirements.

We have spoken again to NHSE&I today, and while we understand that they are planning to send out communications on pharmacy Easter opening as soon as they can – and we are continuing to stress the urgency of this – we are very mindful of the pressures that front line pharmacies are under: this ambiguity is unhelpful.

From our latest conversations with NHSE&I it is now our understanding that NHSE&I will treat Good Friday and Easter Monday as normal working days for their staff. GPs will be working 'as usual' and it is clear that NHSE&I **will be requiring all community pharmacies to be open for a few hours** on both those days as well.

It is likely that this requirement for community pharmacies to open for a few hours on both Good Friday and Easter Monday will be made via an announcement under the **[new coronavirus related NHS regulations that are part of the terms of service](#)**.

Our understanding of the rationale for this decision is that NHSE&I expect COVID-19 infection to increase during the Easter weekend and hospitals may well look to discharge as many non-C-19 patients as possible into the community to free up capacity. As a result, community pharmacy services will be required at this crucial time.

PSNC has been clear to NHSE&I that any requirements for pharmacies to be open additional hours will need to be accompanied by fair funding, and we will begin discussions on that as soon as NHSE&I are able to confirm their intentions.

### **PSNC CEO Simon Dukes said:**

"Although we do not yet have formal confirmation of NHSE&I's decision on Easter opening hours, with less than a week to go for community pharmacies to make logistical plans for staffing, we are continuing to let contractors have as much information as we do have, when we have it. It is clear from our latest conversations that pharmacies will be expected to open for a few hours on both Good Friday and Easter Monday.

NHSE&I communications will follow in due course and will be pressing for funding to cover the additional costs that opening for additional hours – on such short notice and on bank holidays – will bring for contractors who are already struggling to make ends meet through this public health crisis."

**Keep up-to-date with our hub page: [psnc.org.uk/coronavirus](https://psnc.org.uk/coronavirus)**

*Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee*



14 Hosier Lane, London, EC1A 9LQ  
Tel: 0203 1220 810 | Email: [info@psnc.org.uk](mailto:info@psnc.org.uk)