



Daily Update

Friday 24th July 2020

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

In today's update: expansion of NHS flu vaccinations; use of face masks by pharmacy staff; risk assessment progress survey; fake benzodiazepines alert.

NHS flu vac programme targets 30 million people as expansion of eligible groups announced

As indicated in the [Annual flu letter](#) published earlier this year, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has today confirmed expansions to the eligible groups for the national flu immunisation programme for 2020/21.

In a move that will now mean that more than 30 million people will be included in the eligibility criteria, DHSC has announced the following new additional eligible groups:

- **People aged 50 to 64;**
- **Household contacts of those who are on the shielded patient list;** and
- An expansion of the schools' programme to include the first year of secondary school (year 7).

The first two listed groups will be able to access vaccination from community pharmacies under the NHS flu vaccination service, however **the offer of vaccination to the 50-64 years group will not commence until later in the season.**

The announcement states that once vaccination of the most 'at-risk' groups is well underway, the Department will work with clinicians to decide when to open the programme to invite the new group for vaccination. The NHS will contact people directly to make them aware of their eligibility and will include information about where to go to get the vaccine.

[Read more about the DHSC announcement](#)

Updated guidance on use of face masks by pharmacy staff

Public Health England (PHE) has updated its guidance on the wearing of facemasks in primary and community health care settings. In summary, the recommendation is that all pharmacy staff now wear facemasks, unless the pharmacy is COVID-19 secure, including all staff being able to maintain a social distance from one another.

The recommendation is for a Type I or Type II face mask to be worn to prevent the spread of infection from the wearer. If Type IIR face masks are more readily available, and there are no supply issues for their use as personal protective equipment, then these can be used as an alternative to Type I or Type II masks.

[Read the updated PHE guidance](#)

Second window opens on risk assessment progress survey

Community pharmacy contractors are reminded that the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) is collecting information on progress on completing individual staff COVID-19 risk assessments, with the second (and final) window for collection **open until 11.59pm on 31st July**.

All contractors are asked to submit a declaration, even if all staff assessments were completed during the first window.

To help with completion, NHSBSA has advised that they are able to provide pharmacy head offices with a spreadsheet to enable a bulk submission. This spreadsheet can be requested by emailing: nhsbsa.pharmacysupport@nhs.net

Further details on the survey – as well as staff risk assessment templates and guidance – can be found on our [PPE, staff safety and security webpage](#).

CAS Alert: Evidence of harm from illicit benzodiazepines

Public Health England has issued an alert of the availability of, and harm from, illicit drugs sold as benzodiazepines particularly when used in conjunction with alcohol and drugs with a respiratory depressant effect including gabapentinoids and opioids. Pharmacy teams in contact with people who use drugs should raise awareness and be able to recognise possible symptoms of overdose and respond appropriately.

[View the CAS alert in full](#)

Keep up-to-date on COVID-19 with our hub page: psnc.org.uk/coronavirus

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee



RSS

LinkedIn

twitter

facebook

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