

Community Pharmacy Bulletin

Date: 30 April 2024

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Annual Complaints Report 01 April 2023 - 31 March 2024

Under the provisions of the National Health Service (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013, pharmacy contractors are required to make arrangements for the handling and consideration of complaints. A mandatory part of these arrangements includes the requirement for each pharmacy contractor to prepare an annual report for each year, ending 31 March.

This Annual Report must: -

- specify the number of complaints which the pharmacy contractor received.
- specify the number of complaints which the pharmacy contractor decided were well-founded.
- specify the number of complaints which the pharmacy contractor has been informed have been referred to the Health Service Commissioner¹ to consider under the 1993 Act; and
- summarise the subject matter of complaints that the pharmacy contractor received.
- summarise any matters of general importance arising out of those complaints, or the way in which the complaints were handled.
- summarise any matters where action has been or is to be taken to improve services as a consequence of those complaints.

To make things easier for you, we have produced a template on MS Forms should you wish to use it for your return:

- Please click the following link: [Annual Complaints Report - 1st April 2023-31st March 2024](#)

The report for 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 must be submitted by **20th May 2024**

Evaluation of the clinical services commissioned under the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF 2019-24)

Over the course of the last 5 years NHS England started a journey to transform community pharmacy, delivering a range of clinical services to improve patient care and to also support General Practice. NHS England have recently commissioned RAND Europe, an independent external research organisation, to undertake an evaluation of the clinical services commissioned under the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF 2019-24). Through this evaluation they hope to gain the information required to inform future strategy, and to make effective decisions regarding clinical services for the community pharmacy sector.

They want to:

- understand the effectiveness of the CPCF clinical services, what your successes, opportunities, challenges, and barriers have been.
- consider the commissioning arrangements and to understand the key factors that impact on service delivery.
- understand the experience of the community pharmacy workforce and its contractors in providing these services.
- understand the patient experience and outcomes of clinical services.

Attached is an information sheet from RAND to outline more details on how the evaluation will run.

Revised Schedule of Payments expected in April

The look of your monthly Schedule of Payments (and eSchedules) is changing from April 2024. The next payment schedule received on the 23 April (for February 2024 dispensing month) will have several improvements including:

- Breakdown of Pharmacy First payments, alongside activity data relating to this
- Total reimbursement and discount deduction split by generics/brands/appliances rates and between prescriptions and Pharmacy First Clinical Pathway items.
- VAT information for products supplied under Pharmacy First Clinical Pathways
- The split of consumable and container allowances between prescriptions and Pharmacy First Clinical Pathway items
- The split of patient levies between prescriptions and Pharmacy First Clinical Pathway items

The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) has now published an example of the new look payment schedule / eSchedule on their [website](#).

Top tips to Maximise Dispensing Income

Community Pharmacy England has prepared a [new factsheet](#) to help pharmacy owners maximise their income from dispensing. The factsheet includes top tips to help maximise income or reduce losses when:

- Dispensing
- Ordering
- Endorsing prescriptions
- Submitting claims/prescriptions for payment (including end-of-month MYS declaration)
- Reconciling payments against claims submitted

The factsheet also links to a wealth of resources available on the [Community Pharmacy England website](#) for more information on specific topic areas which can be accessed as needed.

GP Connect Update Record

GP Connect: Update Record is a new feature that Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) will add to CPCF IT systems, so that community pharmacy service consultation data will automatically flow from the pharmacy system to the GP system. This reduces the need for the pharmacy to send an NHSmail to the GP practice regarding consultations.

IT suppliers that rollout the feature plan to cover pharmacy consultations for the Pharmacy First service, the Hypertension Case-Finding Service, and the Pharmacy Contraception Service. The rollout of this feature is dependent on testing and monitoring. IT suppliers should communicate with their users as they add the feature for more of their users.

[For further details click here.](#)

Prescription charge to rise to £9.90 on 1st May 2024

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has announced that from **1st May 2024**, the NHS prescription charge will increase to £9.90 per prescription item (note: some items may incur more than one charge). For [prescriptions dispensed in April 2024](#), the NHS prescription charge will remain at £9.65.

[Amendments to the National Health Service \(Charges for Drugs and Appliances\) Regulations](#) have been laid before Parliament which introduces changes not just for the NHS prescription charge but also for prescription prepayment certificates (PPCs), including the Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) PPC.

The cost of a three-month PPC will become £32.05, whilst a 12-month PPC is increasing to £114.50. PPCs offer savings for those needing any four or more prescription items in three months, or 12 or more items in a year. The more specific HRT PPC will also increase to £19.80. Note, this PPC can only be used when a patient is prescribed a [listed HRT medicine](#). Patients can check the NHSBSA website for [an up-to-date list of HRT medicines covered by the HRT PPC](#).

[Please follow link for further information.](#)

Medicines not covered by the HRT PPC

NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) is seeing an increase in prescriptions where patients are claiming prescription charge exemption by selecting the “*HRT only prescription prepayment certificate*” exemption reason for products that are not covered by the HRT Prescription Prepayment Certificate (HRT PPC).

For example, patients are incorrectly using the HRT PPC exemption reason for medicines such as Medroxyprogesterone (Provera), Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) and Testosterone gel. The list of HRT medicines covered by the HRT PPC is published in Part XVI of the [Drug Tariff](#).

Patients can check the NHSBSA website for [an up-to-date list of HRT medicines covered by the HRT PPC](#). If a patient is unsure whether they are entitled to free prescriptions, pharmacy teams should advise the patient to pay for their prescription and provide them with an FP57 Refund form with information on [how to claim a refund](#) at a later date. Further information for patients can be found at www.nhs.uk/healthcosts.

The NHSBSA will continue to process the prescription in accordance with the exemption or charge status declared by the patient. However, NHSBSA’s Exemption Checking Services (ECS) carry out checks on patient claims and if they cannot confirm that a patient was entitled to claim free NHS prescriptions, the patient will be sent an enquiry letter asking them to confirm their entitlement. DHSC advise that if patients found to have wrongly claimed help from the NHS with the cost of their NHS prescriptions will face a penalty charge and, in some cases, prosecution.

Advanced Services

Pharmacy First Claims and Payments

Some pharmacy owners are continuing to identify issues with the Pharmacy First service figures within the MYS portal, which are not matching the number of consultations completed within their Pharmacy First IT system.

Where a pharmacy owner has identified a discrepancy, you are advised to log a support ticket with your IT system supplier, setting out the discrepancy in the numbers and including screenshots of the relevant consultation totals from within your Pharmacy First IT system and from MYS.

Clinical pathways consultations (that pass the gateway point) completed within a month count towards the monthly minimum number of consultations for the £1,000 Pharmacy First monthly payment for that month. These should be claimed as soon as possible but can be claimed up to three months after the month the consultation was completed, e.g. the last date a claim can be made for a consultation that was completed in March 2024 is 5th July 2024.

The £1,000 monthly payment will be paid when the minimum number of consultations is met so if for example four consultations are [claimed by 6th April 2024 \(the extended FP34C submission timeline\)](#) for consultations completed in March 2024 and a further consultation is claimed by 5th May for a consultation completed in March 2024, the £1,000 payment relating to consultations that took place in March will be paid in the end of June payment.

The initial £2,000 Pharmacy First fixed payment will be recovered from contractors who have not submitted claims for five clinical pathways consultations (which pass the gateway point) completed by 31st March 2024 and claimed at the latest by 5th July 2024.

New Pharmacy First materials aimed at GPs

Community Pharmacy England has launched a set of materials – including a video animation and infographic – explaining how GP practices can electronically refer into the Pharmacy First service.

The digital explainers have been developed to help increase understanding of the Pharmacy First service amongst GPs and practice teams. The animation describes when electronic referrals to pharmacies can be made and the consultations that pharmacists provide, as well as learning from similar services. The infographic offers the same information in a one-page factsheet format, and there's also a range of social media-friendly content.

Further details can be found here [New Pharmacy First materials aimed at GPs - Community Pharmacy England \(cpe.org.uk\)](https://cpe.org.uk)

Hypertension Case-Finding Service: Maximising the use of my team

Community Pharmacy England have created a series of articles to help pharmacy owners and their teams to maximise the potential of the Hypertension Case-finding Service (HCFS).

The re-launch of the service, including the ability to use the wider pharmacy team to provide parts of the service, allows pharmacy owners to review how they provide the service, and this is the first of a series of articles which will focus on a range of topics to support pharmacies in doing that; [Hypertension Case-Finding Service reminder \(#1\): Maximising the use of my team - Community Pharmacy England \(cpe.org.uk\)](https://cpe.org.uk)

Health Campaigns

Covid-19 Spring 2024 Vaccination Campaign

COVID-19 vaccination bookings opened this week for those aged 75 and over and those with a weakened immune system, with appointments available from 22 April. Bookings can be made online via the NHS App or by visiting the [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk). Those that can't get online can call 119 for free where translators will also be available. There are also [walk-in sites](https://www.nhs.uk) available across the country. To help communicate the spring vaccine offer, a communications toolkit has been prepared which includes posters, digital screens, stickers and flyers.

Please see attached poster to display in your pharmacy to promote the campaign. This is not a mandatory campaign.

Quality & Regulations

Patient Safety Professional Standards

The [Patient Safety Professional Standards: Responding to Patient Safety Incidents](https://www.rps.org.uk) has been developed by the RPS, Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK and Pharmacy Forum NI, with the support of a steering group

and a public consultation. Community Pharmacy England, representatives from the NHS, professional bodies, and regulators were also part of the steering group.

Following the public consultation, the steering group discussed the proposed changes to ensure the standards were “current, in scope and fit for purpose”.

The work on the standards was prompted by a review and was updated to incorporate key regulation changes and guidance from NHS England and the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). Updates were also made to the terminology and the inclusion of just culture and duty of candour.

[Read the standards](#)

To support the launch of the standards, the RPS is hosting a patient safety standards webinar to provide more information about what is new with the standards, who they’re for and how to use them. Follow this [link](#) to register for the event being held on **Thursday 9th May 2024, 7-8 pm**.

PHS Clinical Waste Provider – Labelling of Clinical Waste for Collection

Changes to ERP05-07 legislation for the labelling of clinical waste.

For contractors who have **PHS** collect their clinical waste, please note to meet the requirements of [ERP05-07 legislation](#) around the labelling of clinical waste, **PHS** are implementing a waste labelling initiative to ensure proper categorisation and disposal of this waste.

The legislation says that businesses must label their own clinical waste before collection, meaning **PHS** can no longer pick up unlabelled waste.

In order to keep contractor’s compliant pharmacies will receive their bags and labels from their PHS Service Technician during their regular service starting from this April 2024.

Please see attached poster explaining how the new labelling of clinical waste will work.

Training & Development

Pharmacy technicians to be given greater powers to supply and administer medicines

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has announced plans to update legislation which will enable registered pharmacy technicians to supply and administer medicines under a patient group direction (PGD).

Note, these new powers will not be able to be used until the required legislative changes have been laid and come into force. There is no known timescale for this currently. For further information please click [here](#).

Dispensing Doctors

Dispensing Services Quality Scheme 2024/25

Dispensing GP practices who intend to participate in the Dispensary Services Quality Scheme (DSQS) for 2024/25 will be required to notify the NHS South West Collaborative Commissioning Hub of that intention by 1 July 2024.

On the **31 May 2024** an invitation to sign up to the scheme will be sent to all dispensing practices across the region; deadline for sign to the scheme will be midnight on the **30 June 2024**.

If you have any questions with regards the 2024/25 scheme or sign up please do not hesitate to contact the team at england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net.

Shortages

Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs)

All current Serious Shortage Protocols can be viewed via [BSA website](#).

If you have any questions regarding SSPs please contact the NHS Prescription Service:

- Email: nhsbsa.prescriptionservices@nhsbsa.nhs.uk
- Telephone: 0300 330 1349
- Textphone: 18001 0300 330 1349

DHSC Medicine Supply Notifications

DHSC and NHSE/I have now launched an online [Medicines Supply Tool](#), which provides up to date information about medicine supply issues. The contents of these MSNs can now be viewed on the Tool. The Tool also details any changes to resupply dates and updates to the entries. To access the Tool, you will be required to register with the [SPS website](#).

The Medicine Supply Tool is moving on the SPS website. Update your links and bookmark its new home in the 'Tools' section: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/home/tools/medicines-supply-tool/>

Medicine Alerts

For information on medical alerts, recalls and safety information regarding drugs and medical devices please see the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency below:

[Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Digital & Technology

Community Pharmacy IT developments – update

NHS England has been working with community pharmacy system suppliers to develop clinical consultation record templates to support the delivery and reimbursement of essential and advanced clinical services.

In 2023/24, the systems for NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service, NHS Hypertension Case-Finding Service and NHS New Medicine Service were provided free of charge to contractors. This period has been extended and did not revert to the business-as-usual approach where pharmacy owners contract and fund their own IT systems on 1 April 2024 as originally planned. We will update contractors in due course on when we expect to see suppliers revert to the business-as-usual approach.

Updating NHS Website Profile and DoS Profile

Please ensure any changes to your opening times, contact information and services information including advanced services are updated using Profile Manager to ensure your pharmacy's NHS website profile and your DoS profile are kept up to date at all times.

Guidance and helpful video tutorials on how to check and update your profile using NHS Profile Manager can be found here [NHS Profile Manager](#).

NHS Smart Card

Could all contractors please ensure all pharmacists, especially locums, are reminded to ensure they have their smartcard with them for all shifts. This is especially critical at weekends and on bank holidays as there is likely to be more limited access to pharmaceutical services on these days.

If you have received automated messages about NHS smartcard renewal, please renew them as soon as possible.

If NHS Digital do not manage to increase the rate of renewal now, it will inevitably result in a rush of users requiring smartcard renewals through the Care Identity Service with increasing urgency.

This could lead to delays in access to systems and services, due to backlogs of renewals being requested for processing by Registration Authorities. Any impact on the Care Identity Service will not affect authentication and access to clinical systems for users with a valid smartcard. Please use the link for smartcard renewals [Self-renewal NHS smartcard service - NHS Digital](#)

Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSP) 2023/2024

There are several planned webinars providing a Data Security and Protection Toolkit update, and question and answer session. The events are aimed at organisations who are working on their DSP Toolkits for 2023-24.

Please see link below for further information: [News \(dsptoolkit.nhs.uk\)](#)

The deadline for the Data Security and Protection Toolkit is **30th June 2024**.

A downloadable copy of the Assertions and Evidence items for the 2023-24 Data Security and Protection Toolkit is [Assertions and Evidence Items 23-4 V6.xlsx](#)

Please note – Headquarter Organisations

When completing the Data Security and Protection Toolkit, if you are submitting under a 'Headquarters' organisation, e.g., completing the toolkit for several branches under one headquarter code; please ensure you select all the appropriate linked branches. If you do not select the branches linked under your headquarter organisation those branches will not be complaint.

GDPR email requirements

We would like to remind all contractors any emails containing patient identifiable information must be sent from a secure email address, preferably the pharmacies shared generic nhs.net store email address. Any emails with patient details must not be sent from a non-secure email address as this could result in a breach of GDPR.

Please see attached the guidance regarding the investigation and reporting of incidents where any potential breach of GDPR has occurred.

Email Correspondence – Signature Details

Please can you ensure when communicating with the NHS South West Collaborative Commissioning Hub's Community Pharmacy Team you include the following details within your correspondence to help us with responding to your enquiry. Many thanks.

- Contact Name
- Name of Contractor
- ODS Code (F Code)

Useful Information

Temporary Suspensions of Pharmaceutical Services

Following changes to the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013 from 31st July 2023, it is a Terms of Service requirement for each NHS community pharmacy owner to have a business continuity plan for a temporary suspension of service due to illness or other reasons beyond their control, and to action this when necessary.

In accordance with regulations, contractors must notify the commissioner of any temporary suspension in service; including those for reasons due to illness or causes beyond the control of the contractor. In accordance with pharmacy regulations contractors must provide evidence to the commissioner they have undertaken the following:

- Notified the commissioner of the suspension as soon as practical.
- Used all reasonable endeavors to implement the business continuity plan required by paragraph 29D, Schedule 4 of the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013, and
- Used all reasonable endeavors to resume the provision of pharmaceutical services as soon as is practicable. (Paragraph 23(10), Schedule 4, of the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013.

In the event of you being unable to open please complete a Temporary Suspension closure form which can be found [here](#) and send this to our generic email address: england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net

Please click the link below to take you to the Microsoft Form:

- [Pharmacy contractor notification of a Temporary Suspension of Services](#)

Changes of director and/or superintendent pharmacist.

When a body corporate appoints a new director and / or a new superintendent they must inform the commissioner within 30 days of the person taking up that new position. Recent experience suggests that contractors sometimes overlook making these declarations.

To make such a declaration you should go to the Primary Care Support England (PCSE) website at <https://pcse.england.nhs.uk/services/pharmacy-market-administration-services/market-entry/> where you will be able to complete the necessary declarations.

Failure to notify any changes to directors and / or superintendent pharmacist maybe a breach of your terms of service.

Pharmacy Support for Health & Wellbeing

Please see below support available for our NHS people with free confidential coaching and support for the primary care workforce.

- Wellbeing apps:
 - NHS staff have been given free access to a number of wellbeing apps to support their mental health and wellbeing.
 - Link: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/wellbeing-apps/>
- Mental Health and Wellbeing:
 - Guidance and advice on how you can stay mentally healthy and boost your wellbeing from Pharmacists' Support.
 - Link: <https://pharmacistsupport.org/i-need-help-managing-my/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>
- Addiction support:
 - Information about the free and confidential addiction support provided by Pharmacists Support.
 - Link: <https://pharmacistsupport.org/how-we-can-help/addiction-support-programme/>
- Managing your finances:
 - Information and guidance on money management and finding financial assistance from Pharmacists Support.
 - Link: <https://pharmacistsupport.org/i-need-help-managing-my/finances/>
- Physical Health:
 - Support on Physical Health from Pharmacists Support, including how to easily incorporate exercise and healthy eating into your daily routine, and the benefits of doing so.
 - Link: <https://pharmacistsupport.org/i-need-help-managing-my/physical-health/>
- Royal Pharmaceutical Society Wellbeing Guide
 - Wellbeing Guide from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society
 - Link: <https://www.rpharms.com/resources/pharmacy-guides/your-wellbeing>

Training Resources for Pharmacists

- E-learning: Dealing with difficult discussions:
 - E-learning programme from the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education.
 - Link: <https://www.cppe.ac.uk/programmes/l/diffdisc-e-01>
- Resource Pack: Stopping violence in the Pharmacy:
 - Resource pack from the pharmacists' defence association.
 - Link: <https://www.the-pda.org/wp-content/uploads/stopping-violence-resources.pdf>

Interpretation and Translation Services

Interpretation and translation services are available for Community Pharmacies when treating NHS Patients. These services are commissioned and paid for by NHS England.

The information and how to access these are available on the South West Pharmacy website page via the following link [Interpretation & Translation Services](#).

The services commissioned cover the following areas:

- Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG)
- Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire (BSW)
- Cornwall & Isles of Scilly

- Devon
 - Dorset
 - Gloucestershire
 - Somerset
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Contact Details and Further Information

South West Collaborative Commissioning Hub Community Pharmacy Contract Management Team contact information: email: england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net.

Website: [South West Community Pharmacy information](#) for more further information, blank templates, forms, and documents.