

The White House, 18 Church Road,

Leatherhead, KT22 8BB

Tel: 01372 389270

**To all practices in Surrey and Sussex LMCs**

7thh April 2020

Dear Colleagues

**Changes in Community Pharmacy Standard Operating Procedures [SOP] during Covid-19 Emergency**

There have been changes to the Community Pharmacy SOPs to allow Community Pharmacy colleagues to respond to the challenges faced during the Covid-19 emergency. Full details are available at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/preparedness-letters-for-community-pharmacy/>

where updates are published

The LMC is in contact with LPC colleagues and any queries regarding this letter can be sent to the LMC.

Key principles from this guidance are: -

1. Pharmacies are to publicly display relevant public health information in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic that can be seen before the public enter the building.
2. Pharmacies, depending on the lay out of their premises, will operate a social distancing [2m] policy or may manage controlled entry: exit at their door
3. NHS England is looking to establish a home delivery service from pharmacies; particularly for the most vulnerable. However, this service is not yet up and running and GP colleagues should not assume its ready availability. Instead patients should be directed to national and local volunteer support in the first instance. Pharmacies will do the same, as the service should be seen, when operating, as only complimentary to other transport support services.
4. Pharmacies are likely, because of pressure on staff and staff shortages, to be operating shorter opening hours. All pharmacies will be open 10a.m – 12 noon and 2p.m – 4p.m, as a minimum. Many will be open longer, but not necessarily their normal full hours.

100 hour contracted pharmacies will have core opening hours of 10a.m – 12 noon and 2p.m – 6p.m

1. If a local pharmacy must close, there should be local arrangements to ensure local GP practices are informed; however, I have asked the LPC to request CP colleagues to try and inform local GP practices of such a closure directly.
2. During the forthcoming Easter Bank Holidays, Community Pharmacies have the following guidance from NHSE in relation to their opening hours:

***Community Pharmacies should be open from 2pm to 5pm on 10 April 2020 (Good Friday) and 13 April 2020 (Easter Monday)***

*With the following additional information:*

* *Any pharmacies already planning to open for longer hours should do so;*
* *If a pharmacy is unable to open for reasons beyond the control of the contractor they should notify their NHSE&I regional office in the usual way and update the NHS 111 DoS;*
* *Community pharmacies in areas where there is minimal demand due to the Government’s social distancing policy (eg in large shopping centres) should seek exemption from their NHSE&I regional team; and*
* *Pharmacies should make sure NHS website profiles include correct opening hours to support patient access.*

*NHSE&I regional teams have been given power to stand down pharmacies in local areas where there is minimal demand due to the Government’s social distancing policy (e.g. large shopping malls)*

**Dispensing Practices**: dispensing practices should remain in touch with the Dispensing Doctors Association, which is providing specific advice, as it is probable that some dispensing restrictions will be relaxed during the Covid-19 emergency.

**Finally**

1. **No current prescription interval length should be varied during the Covid-19 emergency; the LMC is aware colleagues may be put under pressure to do so, but they should decline, explaining there is clear professional guidance not to change current prescription interval periods as doing so will destabilise the medicines supply chain, to the detriment of the entire NHS and UK population. If patients are put on new medication during this period, they should be prescribed 28 day interval prescriptions**
2. **All GPs are asked to encourage any patients not currently using EPS to do so**
3. **The LPC has provided the LMC with a list of all Community Pharmacy nhs email details (Surrey and Sussex only, not London); this can be accessed via the LMC website. This is for professional use only (and not to be shared with members of the public) and SHOULD NOT be used for urgent patient clinical queries as there is no assured timescale in terms of responding to such emails**

With best wishes



Dr Julius Parker

**Chief Executive**