

Welcome to the **COVID-19** K&M Medicines Optimisation (MO) news update.

Articles in this week's edition include:

- Community Pharmacy Bank Holiday Opening Times
- Reminder on Prescription Durations
- Transmission of Prescriptions From Primary Care Treatment Centres/ Hot Zones in General Practice
- Urgent Prescriptions for Shielded Patients During COVID-19
- Reminder on the NHS Volunteers Scheme
- Access to Primary Care for Foreign Nationals & Citizens Abroad
- Electronic Repeat Dispensing Update
- Latest NICE Rapid Guidelines

Access a list of Medical Specialties/ Professional Body advice with direct links to their respective COVID-19 published guidance [here](#)

Please send all medicines queries relating to COVID-19 and any further points of clarification for the articles written to:

[wkccg.gpscovid19@nhs.net](mailto:wkccg.gpscovid19@nhs.net)

### Community Pharmacy Bank Holiday Opening (Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May)

NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have confirmed its expectations for community pharmacies to open this coming bank holiday, Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May. All community pharmacies will open between 2-5pm as a minimum; some pharmacies may be open longer or in different time slots, these exceptions would have been agreed in advance with NHSE&I regional teams.

**Also to note** that Boots Pharmacy in Bluewater Shopping Centre reopened on the 30/04/20 and are open 9am – 6pm Monday to Saturday, and 11am-5pm on Sunday.

### Reminder on Prescription Durations

A reminder that longer duration prescriptions should not be issued by prescribers at this time to protect the supply chain and prevent potential shortages. **We strongly recommend 28 days' supply of medication for ALL prescription requests.** Increased supply quantities may put a strain on the supply chain and exacerbate any current shortages.

### One solution would be to utilise electronic repeat dispensing

General practices have been asked to consider putting all suitable patients on electronic repeat dispensing as their next repeat prescriptions are issued. The whole repeatable prescription can be valid for a year, but each repeat should be for no longer than the patient has now. For example, if the patient has prescriptions for a month's supply now, then the repeat dispensing should be set up as 12 x 28 days supply.

More information on electronic repeat dispensing can be found in the article on page 2 and ([here](#)).

### Transmission of Prescriptions From Primary Care Treatment Centres (PCTC)/ Hot Zones in General Practice

It has been noted that some COVID-19 symptomatic patients have been given prescriptions to source from community pharmacy. This should be avoided on all accounts. Infection Prevention Control should be considered when issuing prescriptions to patients with COVID -19 symptoms or those who have been in contact with symptomatic patients. Where possible prescriptions should be sent to pharmacies via EPS and we encourage a discussion to be had with patients about how they can use friends/family or carers to collect the medication on their behalf.

As a Kent and Medway response to COVID-19 each PCTC has an aligned pharmacy who is willing to accept emailed prescriptions (should EPS not be an option) and will deliver medication to patients, if you require further information please do email us at [medwayswale.meds@nhs.net](mailto:medwayswale.meds@nhs.net). We request that all emails to community pharmacies clearly state when delivery is required.

As part of the national response to COVID-19, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) have commissioned a delivery service from community pharmacies to support a specific group of extremely vulnerable patients self-isolating at home.

### Urgent Prescriptions for Shielded Patients During COVID-19

The CCG, alongside the Local Pharmaceutical Committee, have developed a brief **Standard Operating Procedure** (attached) for the provision of urgent prescription medication to patients who are shielding, including care home patients. The SOP outlines the steps a prescriber should take when they prescribe an urgent medicine to a patient who is shielding, to ensure that the medicine is able to be delivered to them in a timely manner. The CCG is working with the LPC on a solution to provide a direct phone number to contact community pharmacies, so that GPs are able to speak to the pharmacy without going through the public telephone numbers. Practices will be informed once this has been arranged.



Urgent prescriptions  
for shielded patients

### Reminder on the NHS Volunteers Scheme

[NHS Volunteer Responders](#) have been mobilised to help support vulnerable individuals who are self-isolating. Referrals for volunteer support can be made by GPs, social prescribing link workers, practice nurses, community pharmacists, hospital discharge teams, NHS 111 and local authorities; for people who are at risk, vulnerable or have been advised to self-isolate. Referrals should be made via the NHS Volunteer Responders referrers' portal available at:

<https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHSreferral>.

Once a healthcare professional has made a request for patient support, the request is identified as an active volunteer task to volunteers registered in the local area. Patients are also able to self-refer by contacting the centre directly on

**0808 196 3382**. Community pharmacists may also utilise this scheme to deliver medicines to patients.

### Access to Primary Care for Foreign Nationals Visiting England & Citizens Abroad

NHS England have stated that people visiting and who have become stranded here as a result of covid-19 can register as temporary residents if they need **urgent** access to primary care (this could be chargeable in accordance with NHS England policy).

With regards to patients abroad, they must seek their own care and pay for it (this should be covered by insurance). NHS England has reciprocal arrangements with some countries but only for emergency care.

**Please note** that the [Clinical Negligence Scheme for General Practice](#) (CNSGP or Crown Immunity) **ONLY** covers patients in **ENGLAND**. Even if they are calling from Scotland practice, it will not be covered by this scheme.

Patients who are running out of their prescription medication and are stranded abroad should be advised to contact their travel insurance company. More advice is available from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, accessible ([here](#)).

### Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD) Update

As many practices will already be aware; NHS England has recommended, where possible, for suitable patients to be moved over to an Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD) system of prescribing; the advantages of eRD, especially during the COVID outbreak includes:

- A reduced footfall to GP practices and to community pharmacies, thereby supporting social distancing
- A reduced workload for prescribers allowing better prioritisation of resources
- Controlled management of the supply chain reducing the number of temporarily unavailable medicines

Both the NHS Business Services Authority along with the CCG medicines management team across Kent & Medway are able to offer initial assistance in identifying patients who may be suitable to move on to eRD. K&M CCG medicines management team has been working with practices to help facilitate this. We also encourage other practices to get in touch with the CCG medicines management team where assistance may be needed. There are a number of resources available to help implement eRD which the medicines management team are able to send and further support practices. For further information on eRD please click [here](#). For any questions please contact [WKCCG.Medman@nhs.net](mailto:WKCCG.Medman@nhs.net) or your aligned medicines management team technician.

### Latest NICE Rapid Guidelines

In response to COVID-19 the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) is producing rapid guidelines to support clinicians manage specific patient groups. The latest guidelines produced are listed and linked below:

- [Gastrointestinal and liver conditions treated with drugs affecting the immune response](#)
- [Acute myocardial injury](#)
- [Children and young people who are immunocompromised](#)

NICE has also published a COVID-19 rapid evidence summary on [acute use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs \(NSAIDs\) for people with or at risk of COVID-19](#) and updated their rapid COVID-19 guideline on [managing symptoms \(including at the end of life\) in the community](#), in light of the NSAIDs summary and added ibuprofen in line with the evidence summary and the NHS England policy.