

**To:**  
Dispensing doctor practices  
in the South East region

NHS England and NHS Improvement  
South East

**Copy to:**  
LMCs  
CCG primary care leads  
CCG medicines management leads

28 April 2020

Dear colleagues

Following a number of queries, I am writing to provide clarification about two separate matters related to arrangements in response to COVID-19.

### **1. Delivery service for patients meeting the COVID-19 shielding criteria**

The letter published by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) on 10 April 2020 set out requirements for both community pharmacies and dispensing doctors to ensure that patients who meet the COVID-19 shielding criteria have their medicines delivered. A copy of the letter can be found here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/C0265-Pharmacy-letter-re-delivery-service-10-April-20.pdf>

The specification for dispensing doctors starts on page 10 and the document explains that there have been changes to the terms of service as well as the option to provide an additional service. Payment for the element that is covered by the terms of service is set out on page 11. This means that dispensing doctors must ensure that patients, who meet the COVID-19 shielding criteria for whom they dispense prescriptions, have their medicines delivered. This may be by friends/family/carer or volunteer or by a pharmacy that is providing a delivery service.

The additional service is optional and payment of £5 plus VAT will be paid for deliveries made by the practice. There is no “sign up” process as such for the service and the national NHSE/I team have confirmed that the claiming and payment mechanism is still being worked up. Practices should keep the details of deliveries made (patient name and date) so that claims can be made when the process is established. We will provide further information as soon as it is available.

The delivery service does not affect any of the rules associated with dispensing and the usual eligibility criteria for dispensing remain unchanged.



## 2. Regulation 61

The Pharmaceutical Services (Advanced and Enhanced Services and Emergency Declaration) Directions 2020 have enacted Regulation 61 of the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013. The link to Regulation 61 is here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/349/regulation/61/made>

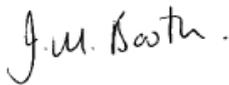
Under Regulation 61(1), NHSE/I may “require” a dispensing doctor to dispense to patients who normally wouldn’t be eligible. We can envisage that this could be needed to maintain access to pharmaceutical services if a pharmacy in a rural area closed for a period of time. The South East regional pharmacy team is closely monitoring pharmacy closures and assessing the impact of each case. A small number of pharmacies have closed because of COVID-19 related illness or because they are in a large shopping centre with greatly reduced footfall. To date we have not “required” any dispensing practices to provide dispensing services for patients dispensing doctors are not otherwise entitled to dispense for. Therefore, there should be no change to the services that dispensing doctors are providing.

PCC have written a guidance document which clearly explains the provisions associated with Regulation 61 (pp. 2-3). The guidance can be found here:

[https://pcc-cic.org.uk/sites/default/files/articles/attachments/briefing\\_-\\_flexible\\_provision\\_of\\_pharmaceutical\\_services\\_apr\\_2020\\_final.pdf](https://pcc-cic.org.uk/sites/default/files/articles/attachments/briefing_-_flexible_provision_of_pharmaceutical_services_apr_2020_final.pdf)

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions about either the delivery service or Regulation 61, please contact the NHSE/I South East primary care team by emailing [england.se.primarycare@nhs.net](mailto:england.se.primarycare@nhs.net).

Yours sincerely



Julia Booth  
Head of Primary Care (South East)