

To: All Pharmacy Contractors

Tel : 028 9536 3375  
Fax : 028 9536 1166  
Web Site : [www.hscboard.hscni.net](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net)24<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Colleague

**COMMUNITY PHARMACY SERVICES – ADDITIONAL FUNDING 20/21****1 Introduction**

Further to correspondence dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July, which confirmed the community pharmacy commissioning plan for 2020/21 and the associated funding of £13.25m, I write to provide a further update in relation to how this investment will be made in the coming months.

During the summer period, extensive survey work was undertaken and I very much appreciate the returns provided. This has been invaluable in taking forward further plans for the remainder of the year. From the survey results, it is evident that additional infrastructure is required to support pharmacies undertaking virtual consultations. To that end grant funding to purchase a tablet device will be provided and should your pharmacy wish to access this funding, please complete the proforma that will be sent out under separate cover next week.

It is evident that a second surge of Corona Virus cases is emerging. It is therefore important to start to plan individual and collective pharmacy response. Contractors are therefore requested to consider particularly their business continuity arrangements for the next six months.

As we enter the next phase, **we will be recommencing ECHO sessions for all community pharmacists beginning Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30pm.** Please follow the link for Registration:- <https://tinyurl.com/t8644oj> The first session will provide an update on the commissioning plan and an opportunity to present the new Community Pharmacy Flu Service.

**2 Commissioning Plan**

As set out previously, three workstreams have been established to take forward development and specification of various services areas:

**Workstream 1 – Pharmacy Organisation****Business Continuity**

- **Secure E-mail**

It is anticipated that all pharmacies will be able to connect to the HSC Network by the end of September. From 1<sup>st</sup> October, the use of secure e-mail by HSC (Board and BSO) will be used to correspond routinely with pharmacies – hard copy correspondence will cease. It will be important that the secure e-mail account is checked on a daily basis and contractors should establish a procedure to do so. Further correspondence will issue in due course on this issue.

- **Sit-Rep (Situation Reporting)**

The frequency of reporting has reduced but it is expected that as service pressure starts to increase, the frequency of reporting will increase again. Pharmacies will be notified in due course of changes to reporting.

- **Clustering**

Locality cluster plans were developed during the first surge of COVID however, there was no requirement to implement clustering arrangements. HSCB local offices will, in the coming weeks, liaise with contractors to establish clustering arrangements in advance of a possible winter surge.

- **Prescription Delivery**

Another key part of the Pharmacy Organisation Workstream is prescription delivery and a new commissioned Community Pharmacy Delivery Service commenced from 1<sup>st</sup> September as detailed in correspondence issued earlier this month.

- **Additional Staff Costs**

It has been recognised that pharmacies may need to invest in additional staff costs. Funding is being set aside from within the £13.25m to support pharmacies which may have additional staff costs. We will be corresponding separately with the indicative funding which is available for your pharmacy. We will be asking contractors to provide outline plans in how this funding would be used and subject to this return, funding will be invested over the remainder of the year. It is accepted that there will be a degree of uncertainty in relation to these plans and we accept the need for flexibility during these very challenging times.

## **Workstream 2 – Medicines Services**

As set out in previous correspondence work is ongoing to shore up the priority medicines services:

- Dispensing
- Adherence Support
- Emergency Supply
- Palliative Care

- Care Homes
- Pharmacy First / Minor Ailments Service

Funding of £1m (£1800 per pharmacy) has been provided to support pharmacies review their existing patients receiving Monitored Dosage Systems and it is expected this will help pharmacies prioritise patients reducing the workload associated with this service.

The Emergency Supply Service is being maintained for the remainder of the year and we will be using the learning from the first surge to inform arrangements for palliative care and care homes for the remainder of the year.

It should be noted that the Medicines Use Review Service and Managing Your Medicines Service have both been suspended for the remainder of 20/21 and funding that was available for these services will be reinvested into other elements of community pharmacy service provision.

We recently advised that the Minor Ailments service was to be recommenced from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 and we intend providing further information on the Pharmacy First service in the coming weeks with the aim of introducing a new Pharmacy First Service from 1<sup>st</sup> November.

### **Workstream 3 – Pharmaceutical Public Health**

During August, it was confirmed that the Smoking Cessation Service was to be recommenced. The grant funding for a tablet will support the remote delivery of elements of this service over the next few months

HSCB is currently working with PHA to determine the number of Living Well campaigns that can be delivered over the next six months and this will be confirmed in due course.

The expressions of interest in the proposed service to provide flu vaccination to healthcare workers are appreciated and 381 contracts have been submitted. The fee rate for vaccination is set by PHA but in order to support infrastructure arrangements within each pharmacy, a set-up grant of £250 per pharmacy will be made available to those that proceed to sign-up. Further details will issue in due course

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### **3 Funding Summary**

£10m is being invested into the various pharmacy organisation arrangements:

- Business Continuity - £2.25m is being invested from July to March 2021 (£250k per month; £473 per contract per month)

- Delivery Services - £3m as set out in the correspondence dated 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020
- Staff Costs – £4.75m - correspondence will shortly issue to set out the indicative funding being made available.

£2m is being invested into additional service areas:

- Pharmacy First
- Care Homes
- Palliative Care
- Emergency Supply

£1.25m is being invested into the Living Well Service (£250k per campaign).

Separate to this, funding is being provided to support adherence assessment and infrastructure costs as explained previously.

### Conclusion

As we approach the Autumn/Winter period, it is understandable that there will be a degree of anxiety. During the first surge of COVID-19, we worked collectively together as a system to ensure services were maintained and pharmacies remained safe and accessible for our population through very challenging times. I have every confidence that through continued collaboration we will maintain the delivery of safe and effective pharmacy services throughout this period for our population.

If you have any queries concerning this letter, please don't hesitate to contact your local pharmacy adviser.

Yours sincerely,



**Joe Brogan**  
**Assistant Director of Integrated Care**  
**Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management**

<b>Contact Details for Local Integrated Care Offices:</b>				
<b>Belfast</b>	<b>South Eastern</b>	<b>Southern</b>	<b>Northern</b>	<b>Western</b>
12-22 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BS	12-22 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BS	Tower Hill Armagh. BT61 9DR	County Hall 182 Galgorm Road Ballymena BT42 1QB	Gransha Park House 15 Gransha Park Clooney Road Londonderry BT47 6FN
Tel: 028 9536 3926	Tel: 028 9536 3926	Tel: 028 9536 2104	Tel: 028 9536 2812	Tel: 028 9536 1082
<a href="mailto:pharmacyservicesbelfast@hscni.net">pharmacyservicesbelfast@hscni.net</a>	<a href="mailto:pharmacyservicesse@hscni.net">pharmacyservicesse@hscni.net</a>	<a href="mailto:pharmacyservicesouth@hscni.net">pharmacyservicesouth@hscni.net</a>	<a href="mailto:pharmacyservicesnorth@hscni.net">pharmacyservicesnorth@hscni.net</a>	<a href="mailto:pharmacyserviceswest@hscni.net">pharmacyserviceswest@hscni.net</a>