

To:
All Community Pharmacies
GP (Substitute prescribers)

Trust Chief Executives *for onward
distribution to:*
Trust Community Addiction Teams
Trust Substitute Prescribing Teams

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25th November 2020

Dear Colleague

SUPERVISION OF OPIOID SUBSTITUTION TREATMENT (OST)

HSCB issued correspondence in [March 2020](#) advising on the immediate stand down of community pharmacy supervised consumption arrangements for opioid substitution treatment (OST) due to the increasing pressure and demand that community pharmacy services were experiencing as a result of COVID-19.

In [April 2020](#), following discussions with Addictions services leads, it was agreed that supervised consumption of OST should be introduced for high risk patients from community pharmacies where the pharmacy was able to safely do so within a pandemic context.

Further information on the ability to provide additional services such as OST was sought via the Community Pharmacy Survey conducted in July 2020.

HSCB is aware of the difficulties currently facing community pharmacies as a result of COVID-19. In the interest of patient safety however, HSCB would like to ensure that those community pharmacies currently providing an OST service supervise all patients, where this has been agreed with the Community Addiction teams, annotated on the prescription by the prescriber and the pharmacy is safely able to do so. If for any reason, supervision for a particular patient or number of patients, as requested on the prescription cannot be provided, the relevant Community Addiction Team must be informed as soon as possible. The patient can then be risked assessed to ascertain if supervision requirements can be amended or whether an alternative community pharmacy should be identified.

A directory of NI drug and alcohol services can be found via the following link:
<http://services.drugsandalcoholni.info/>

The Community Addiction Service will continue to liaise with community pharmacy providers in the normal way should any new patients requiring supervision of OST be identified.

If you have any general queries relating to OST, please contact Joanne Crawford, Pharmacy Adviser (joanne.crawford2@hscni.net) or the Pharmacy Adviser in your local HSCB office.

Thank you again for your continued commitment to this important service.

Yours sincerely,



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

CC. Gary Maxwell, DoH
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Contact Details for Local Integrated Care Offices:				
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