

Dear Colleague

ADDITIONAL PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES NHS PHARMACY FIRST SCOTLAND – SERVICE REQUIREMENTS AHEAD OF WINTER PERIOD

Purpose

1. This Circular reminds community pharmacy contractors of the requirements of delivering the NHS Pharmacy First Scotland service, and asks contractors to ensure their pharmacists have signed the individual authorisation form for all of the PGDs relating to it in order to support NHS services over the coming winter period.

Background

2. [NHS Circular PCA \(P\)\(2020\) 13](#), issued on 1 July 2020 enclosed the Health Board Additional Pharmaceutical Services (NHS Pharmacy First Scotland) (Scotland) Directions 2020 (“2020 Directions”) which came into force as of 29 July 2020, along with the service specification. It also enclosed Patient Group Directions (PGDs) for two common clinical conditions: UTIs and impetigo.

3. [NHS Circular PCA \(P\)\(2021\) 7](#) issued on 24 May 2021 enclosed Patient Group Directions (PGDs) for two further common clinical conditions: shingles and skin infections, which were added to the service from 15 June 2021.

Detail

4. NHS Pharmacy First Scotland is a national consultation-based service which is expected to be provided in full by all community pharmacy contractors.

5. The service comprises 1) advice, treatment and referral for minor illnesses and 2) advice, treatment and referral for common clinical conditions via Patient Group Directions (PGDs). It should be noted that both elements of the service are mandatory.

7 October 2021

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards
Directors of Pharmacy

For information

Chief Executive, NHS NSS
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Requirements for NHS Pharmacy First Scotland

6. Schedule 4, paragraph 8 of the [Directions](#) for NHS Pharmacy First Scotland states that community pharmacy contractors (the “NHS PFS provider”) must ensure that the pharmacy is able to offer the NHS PFS service as contracted at all times of opening and that all staff providing the NHS PFS service on their behalf, e.g. locums, are competent to deliver the service.

7. In addition, it states that the pharmacist and the NHS PFS provider providing the service must be aware of and operate within the national service specifications, local guidelines, including guidelines on the NHS PFS approved list of products, and PGDs in relation to NHS PFS. The NHS PFS provider must ensure that any pharmacist (including the provider, if applicable) and other staff involved in providing the NHS PFS service for or on behalf of the provider undertake such training as the Health Board may require.

Undertaking and Signing PGDs

8. It has come to light that some pharmacists have not yet signed the PGDs for all four common clinical conditions. This has meant that some patients, who should have been able to receive advice and treatment at their local community pharmacy, have had to be re-directed to their GP practice, or out of hours services, instead.

9. It is vital, particularly as we head towards the 2021/22 winter period, that community pharmacy contractors make sure that all of their pharmacists providing services on their behalf, undertake or have undertaken the necessary training and sign the PGDs so that the contractor is delivering NHS Pharmacy First Scotland in its entirety. This will ensure that the community pharmacy network is able to play its full role in supporting in-hour and out of hour NHS services.

10. The PGDs for UTIs, impetigo, shingles and skin infections are all available online at individual Health Boards’ sections of the NHS Community Pharmacy website at - <https://www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/nhs-boards/>

11. It is imperative that community pharmacists, including locums, familiarise themselves with the PGDs, undertake the associated training, and sign the PGDs. Some health boards require formal notification from community pharmacy contractors that this has been completed.

12. In the case of pharmacists who work in more than one Health Board e.g. locums, it should be noted that the PGDs can be signed and a copy of the same authorisation form returned to up to three health boards. Only one contractor code for each Health Board is required on the form.

Revision to current PGD for UTIs

13. We are exploring the potential for extending the existing PGD for UTIs to offer access to a wider cohort. Further details will be issued in the coming weeks.

Claims for consultations

14. NHS Pharmacy First Scotland is designed as a consultation-based service aimed at responding to symptoms as presented by patients. Where a patient visits their pharmacy requesting to purchase a specific product, this should not be treated as suitable for an NHS Pharmacy First Scotland consultation. It is acknowledged that through further discussion with a patient about their symptoms, it may be identified that offering NHS Pharmacy First Scotland is appropriate. Therefore, pharmacists should use their professional judgement, and provide support to their wider pharmacy team, on when a claim should be made for the provision of NHS Pharmacy First Scotland.

15. The Scottish Government has asked Health Boards to follow up this Circular with their community pharmacy contractors by reminding them of the service requirements relating to NHS Pharmacy First Scotland and ensuring that PGDs are undertaken and signed off.

16. Community Pharmacy Scotland has been consulted on the contents of this Circular.

Actions

Health Boards are asked to note the contents of this Circular and to bring it to the attention of community pharmacy contractors on their Pharmaceutical Lists and Area Pharmaceutical Committees.

Health Boards are asked to share the PGDs again with community pharmacy contractors.

Health Boards are asked to work with their community pharmacy contractors to ensure that all of the PGDs for NHS Pharmacy First Scotland are signed at the earliest opportunity and that the full service is being delivered.

Yours sincerely



Alison Strath
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer