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Newsletter

11th September 2026

Week 38

This newsletter contains important information for Pharmacy Owners and Staffs in Kent & Medway



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NHS England announce the new Pharmacy First prescribing pathways

DHSC and NHS England have formally announced the final choice of the five new prescribing clinical pathways which will be added to the Pharmacy First service this autumn. They are:

1. **Acute otitis externa** – for adults aged 18 years and over
2. **Seasonal allergic rhinitis** – for children aged 4-11 years
3. **Mild to moderate acne** – for young people
4. **Migraine** – low frequency, episodic, adults aged 18-64 years
5. **Mild skin and soft tissue infections and scabies**

Further information to follow shortly; but to read more about this information, click [here](#).



Pharmacy Quality Scheme - Palliative care questionnaire

NHS England has published the clinical audit, developed with Community Pharmacy England, that must be undertaken by pharmacies wanting to complete Domain 2 (Professional practice) of the Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS).

The audit focuses on the quality of Pharmacy First clinical pathway consultations and record-keeping for those consultations.

The audit will result in an action plan to improve practice. In addition to completing the audit, pharmacists will be expected to ensure a pharmacy owner arranges a peer discussion with a 'buddy' pharmacist to review the audit findings and action plan.

Pharmacy owners must ensure the audit, action plan and peer discussion are completed no later than 31st March 2027. The guidance on the audit explains how to undertake the audit and peer discussion using the associated data collection and analysis form.

Some of the collated data must be submitted to NHS England through a data collection tool on the NHSBSA's MYS portal.

[Download the PQS 2026/27 clinical services audit – Pharmacy First clinical pathways consultations](#)



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The audit focuses on the quality of Pharmacy First clinical pathway consultations and record-keeping for those consultations.

An outcome of the audit is the development of an action plan for improving practice. In addition to a pharmacist completing the audit, pharmacy owners will be expected to ensure the pharmacist completes a peer discussion focused on reviewing the findings of the audit and the action plan, with a 'buddy' pharmacist.

Pharmacy owners must ensure the audit, action plan and peer discussion are completed no later than 31st March 2027. The guidance on the audit explains how to undertake the audit and peer discussion using the associated data collection and analysis form.

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[Download the PQS 2026/27 clinical services audit – Pharmacy First clinical pathways consultations](#)



ARE YOU READY FOR THIS AUTUMN FLU AND COVID – 19 VACCINATION

Make sure you're ready to use Record a vaccination (RAVS) for flu and COVID-19 this autumn.

Check you can log in Go to [NHS Record a vaccination](#) and log in.

If your account has been deactivated, ask a lead administrator to reactivate it.

You may notice an extra screen when you next log in, asking if you want to log in with Okta or another way. Most users should continue to log in with their Okta username and password. But some pharmacy users will also have the option of logging in with their pharmacy IT system.

Reactivating Users

Lead administrators can reactivate deactivated users by going to 'Manage users'.

Add vaccine batches

Remember that you need to add vaccine batches before you can start recording. An administrator or lead administrator can do this.

Check what's new in RAVS by clicking [here](#).



Reminder: Supply of unlicensed Propranolol modified-release capsules

A [medicine supply notification \(MSN\)](#) was issued by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in November 2025 to inform pharmacy teams of a shortage affecting Propranolol 80mg and 160mg modified release capsules. Since the publication of the MSN, the [Medicines Supply Tool](#) hosted on the [Specialist Pharmacy Service \(SPS\)](#) website has been updated with an estimated re-supply date showing as early August 2026. Prescribers are advised not to initiate patients on Propranolol 80mg or 160mg modified release capsules due to their unavailability. As an alternative, the MSN recommends prescribers to consider the licensed immediate release Propranolol 40mg and 80mg tablets which remain available and can support an increase in demand.

Whilst specialist importers can source unlicensed Propranolol 80mg or 160mg modified release capsules, prescribers are advised to consider these only where licensed alternatives are not appropriate. Wholesalers will indicate on their online ordering portals if the product listed is an unlicensed special for example by including 'SP' for Special or 'NPL' for No Product License. The unlicensed Propranolol 80mg or 160mg modified release capsules can only be dispensed against prescriptions requesting the unlicensed import. For example, if the unlicensed product is required, prescribers should select either of the following products on their systems:

- *Propranolol 80mg modified-release capsules (Imported); or*

- *Propranolol 160mg modified-release capsules (Imported)*

Where the unlicensed product is not shown on electronic prescribing systems (for example, because prescribing system suppliers have not ‘mapped’ across the appropriate products by using the latest dm+d extract), prescribers should issue a paper prescription and annotate the prescription with the following wording ‘*Special Order*’ or ‘*Imported*’ next to the prescribed item for example, ‘*Propranolol 160mg modified-release capsules (Special Order)*’.

This will ensure that pharmacy teams can legally supply the unlicensed product and be reimbursed accordingly based on the dispenser endorsements including the ‘SP’ endorsement to claim the £20 fixed fee for dispensing a non-Drug Tariff special. Paper prescriptions for unlicensed products must be placed in the relevant red separators during end of month submission process. Community Pharmacy England is aware of situations where the prescriber includes directions to supply an unlicensed special as part of the dosage area field or as additional information. Any supplementary product information added to electronic prescriptions in this way is not captured by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) during prescription pricing therefore pharmacy teams should request replacement prescriptions which are correctly written by the prescriber. Please click on [this link](#) to read more.



Updated HCFS spec published

NHS England published an updated version of the Hypertension Case-Finding Service (HCFS) specification.

To download the new specification, click [here](#)

To read more, click [here](#)



NHS flu vaccination for pregnant women commence

As of 1st September 2026, pregnant women can receive their NHS flu vaccinations from community pharmacies as the NHS flu programme commences ahead of winter.

Pregnant women can get their flu jab at any stage of pregnancy and NHS promotional activity will be encouraging eligible women to get protected.

Other eligible adult groups will be able to receive their flu vaccinations from 1st October 2026.

Childhood flu reminder

While general practice and the school vaccination service can offer children the flu vaccine from today, pharmacy owners are reminded that community pharmacies cannot commence provision of flu vaccinations to eligible children this month.

From 1st October 2026, pharmacies can administer flu vaccines to all children aged 2- and 3-years old **and** clinically at-risk children aged 4-17 years old.

From 1st December 2026, pharmacies can administer flu vaccinations to school aged children (Reception to Year 11).

More information on these services can be found on our service pages.

[Seasonal Vaccination Services – COVID-19 and Adult Flu](#)
[Childhood Flu Vaccination Service](#)



Pharmacy bank holiday opening hours in the remainder of 2026 and in 2027

Request for one off changes to core hours should be submitted by completing relevant form as [attached](#) and provide the evidence that the change meets the regulatory criteria in which the one closure is being requested.

The MYS portal route is only available for temporary suspension notices for circumstances beyond the control of the contractor

CPE has done a useful clarification recently in this guidance in relation to Christmas and New Year Eve closures <https://cpe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Pharmacy-bank-holiday-opening-hours-in-the-remainder-of-2026-and-in-2027-.pdf>



Advance notice of 8 products moving to Category H in September 2026

Following the introduction of Category H in March 2026, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has [announced](#) that the following 8 products will move from Category C to Category H, effective from September 2026:

- Alfuzosin 10mg modified-release tablets
- Diclofenac 100mg suppositories
- Felodipine 10mg modified-release tablets
- Felodipine 2.5mg modified-release tablets
- Felodipine 5mg modified-release tablets
- Fluticasone furoate 27.5micrograms/dose nasal spray
- Nicotine 7mg/24hours transdermal patches
- Sodium fluoride 0.05% mouthwash sugar free

Click [here](#) to read more



Flu and Childhood flu vac: PGD and VGD published

NHS England has authorised and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has published the Patient Group Direction (PGD) and Vaccine Group Direction (VGD) for use in the autumn/winter 2026/27 NHS Flu vaccination campaign. VGDs are a new legal route which can be used to authorise administration of vaccines. In summary, they operate in a similar way to a PGD, with pharmacists and pharmacy technicians operating as the clinician, but with the opportunity

for some tasks within the process (preparation, administration and record-keeping) to be delegated to other suitably trained staff.

The NHS Flu vaccination PGD can be found [here](#)

The NHS Flu vaccination VGD can be found [here](#)

Service Registration Reminder

Pharmacy owners who wish to provide either flu and COVID-19 vaccinations or only adult flu vaccinations as part of the autumn/winter 2026/27 campaign, but who have not yet registered to provide these services, can still do so by using the NHS Business Service Authority's [Manage Your Service \(MYS\) portal](#) to register to provide the service.

The interim deadline for registration is **11.59pm on 31st July 2026** to receive supplies of COVID-19 vaccines ahead of the anticipated autumn 2026 service commencement date.

If registering after 31st July 2026, the pharmacy is not guaranteed to receive COVID-19 vaccine in time for the COVID-19 vaccination commencement date. The final deadline to register to provide flu and COVID-19 vaccinations or only adult flu vaccinations in 2026/27 is **11.59pm on 30th November 2026**.



Mandatory national health campaigns for 2026/27

As part of the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) 2026/27, pharmacy owners are required to take part in two national health campaigns and two local health campaigns (the latter agreed by ICBs and LPCs at a local level).

The first national campaign will focus on the expectation that pharmacy staff are treated with respect so they can undertake their professional practice safely, and in the best interest of both patients and the people working in our pharmacies.

The campaign intends to support the findings of [our recent poll that indicated](#)

[levels of violence and abuse in community pharmacies are increasing.](#)

The first campaign will run from: Monday 5th October 2026 to Sunday 25th October 2026

Pharmacy owners can use assets developed by [NHS England](#) or [Community Pharmacy England](#).

The second campaign will promote the Pharmacy First service to the public and will run from:

Monday 1st February 2027 to Sunday 21st February 2027.



Dear Community Pharmacy Kent,
I hope you are well. I am a doctoral researcher at the University of Kent conducting a study on how community pharmacists balance patient care and commercial pressures in England. The study involves a 15-20 minute anonymous survey for pharmacists.

I am writing to ask whether you would be willing to share the survey link with community pharmacists within your organisation. Participation is voluntary, anonymous, and no patient or identifiable organisational data is collected. The study has been reviewed through the University's ethics procedures.

Your support would help ensure representation across different pharmacy settings and strengthen the sector relevance of the findings.

Please see below the link to the Gatekeeper consent form: https://universityofkent.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bpZ0LX4baZwv6BM



Useful information to support you in your practice.

- [Primary Care Bulletin](#)

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