Community Pharmacy BLMK & Northants

Fortnightly Newsletter – w/c 16 February 2026

This issue covers:

Local News:

- FAO BMK - Emergency Contraception local contract.
- FAO Luton – Emergency Contraception local contract.
- FAO Northants – Changes to the Drug & Alcohol services in North & West Northants.
- FAO Northants – Vaccination & Immunisation programme changes.
- FAO West Northants – MECC information.

Training & Events:

- Spring C-19 vaccination webinars & FDP drop-in sessions.
- New CPPE empowering Pharmacy Technicians to provide services workshops.
- Royal College of Pharmacy – webinars for more inclusivity.
- Stress management & building resilience workshop – **26/2/26 7:15 – 9pm**.

National News/Reminders:

- Pharmacy Pressures Survey 2026 - open until **23:59 on 16/3/26.**
- GDPR themed scam emails.
- Reminder - National Pharmacy First Campaign – **from 2/2/26 – 22/2/26**.
- Reminder - PQS declaration window open – closes **11:59pm 27/2/26**.

Local News

FAO BMK - Update on Public Health Emergency Contraception Contracts in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes City.

In line with the expansion of the NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service to include the offer of EC from 29 October 2025, we have maintained the Public Health offer of free EC for those pharmacies signed up under the current Public Health Enhanced Service (PHES) contract until the **31 March 2026** to avoid any gaps in delivery.

However, from the **1 April 2026**, free EC provision will be removed from the updated PHES offer and the new PHES contracts will allow Pharmacies to deliver the provision of Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea self-testing kits and Chlamydia treatment (under PGD) for 15–24-year-olds (and including partners aged 25 years and above).

Pharmacies will be reimbursed for these services under the new PHES contracts, with an uplift in tariffs.

If you are interested in signing up to the contract, please contact **kate.cheng@bedford.gov.uk** (Public Health Practitioner in Sexual & Reproductive Health for Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes City).
Thank you for your continued support in offering Sexual and Reproductive health services to our local community.

FAO Luton - Update on Emergency Contraception Funding in Luton.
Luton Public Health would like to inform pharmacy colleagues that after **31 March 2026** we will no longer be commissioning or funding Emergency Contraception (EC) through our local contract. This is because EC is now provided as part of the national Pharmacy Contraception Service (PCS) offer.

Please note that all other elements of Luton's local agreement remain unchanged, including provision of chlamydia testing and any other services currently delivered under the local contract. A member of Luton Council's public health team will be in contact with you directly.

Thank you for your continued support in providing accessible sexual and reproductive health services in Luton. If you have any queries, please contact **Geraldine.Reeve@luton.gov.uk**.

FAO Northants - Changes to the drug and alcohol services in North and West Northamptonshire.
North and West Northamptonshire services will disaggregate and the new contract, starting from **1 April 2026** will bring with it some changes. Change Grow Live (CGL) will be handing over the West of the County from April to Turning Point who will primarily operate out of Northampton and local surrounding areas. CGL will be providing services in the North of the County out of their current bases in Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough and are partnering with Forward Trust, Family Support Link and Release to enhance their offer post April 2026.

FAO Northants - Vaccination and Immunisation programme changes.
Russell Dabb left Northamptonshire ICB on 4 February 2026 to take up a new role outside the organisation. We would like to thank Russell for his hard work, dedication, and the positive contribution he has made to our vaccination programmes and wider system working.

During the ongoing Management of Change process (running through to June), **Annie Traynor**, Head of Immunisation and Screening for LLR ICB, will provide leadership for immunisation and screening across Northamptonshire alongside her existing responsibilities. Annie will be the primary point of contact for related matters during this period.

As part of our transition to new cluster arrangements and the ICB's future role as a strategic commissioner, new plans are being developed for the coordination of vaccination programmes across the LNR footprint. **From 1 April 2006**, Patient Care Locally (PCL) will take on system wide coordination functions, including:

- managing the vaccine inbox (new email address to be shared shortly)
- acting as the main point of contact for providers involved in the COVID 19 vaccination programme
- overseeing COVID-19 vaccine supply processes

- managing provider opt in/opt out arrangements for COVID-19, including vaccination of housebound and care home residents for practices that have opted-out

Until PCL is fully mobilised, please continue to use the SPOC mailbox (**northantsicb.spoc@nhs.net**) for any queries. The SPOC team will work closely with Annie, ICB colleagues, and PCL as they prepare for full transition, ensuring timely responses.

FAO West Northants - **West Northamptonshire MECC Link**.
It includes a wide range of additional resources not covered elsewhere, alongside practical tips for effective conversations and the *3 As* for each topic. To support uptake, they have developed a short video demonstrating how staff can use the MECC Link, as well as a **MECC promotional video from our Director of Public Health** and a **case study from a Wellbeing Adviser**.

In addition, they have established the **MECC West Northamptonshire Knowledge Hub**, which our workforce are very welcome to sign up to. This enables staff to receive updates directly and access relevant information as and when needed. There also now a dedicated MECC logo, certificates, lanyards and other promotional materials to further strengthen visibility and embed the programme.

Training & Events

Spring 2026 COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign: Training Webinars.
The Spring 2026 COVID-19 vaccination campaign introduces important changes to how vaccine is allocated, ordered and delivered. To help you prepare, NHS England is running a series of live training webinars.
Each session type covers the same content, so you only need to attend one session:

- **Tuesday 24 February 2pm – 3pm**.
- **Thursday 26 February 7pm – 7:45pm.**
- **Tuesday 3 March 3:30pm – 4:30pm**.
- **Wednesday 4 March 10am – 11am**.

Weekly drop-in sessions will continue from April through May (and beyond if needed) to support any ongoing questions once the campaign is underway.

Before attending: Please log into Federated Data Platform (FDP) ahead of your training session so you can follow along with the demonstrations. **FDP drop-in sessions and further guidance are available.**

New CPPE Empowering pharmacy technicians to provide services workshop.
The Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) has launched a new workshop designed to equip pharmacy technicians with the competence and confidence to safely supply or administer medicines under Patient Group Directions (PGDs).

Proposals for a more inclusive Royal College of Pharmacy.

The UK Pharmacy Professional Leadership Advisory Board has published an **open letter** inviting pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, trainees, students and the wider pharmacy team to join a series of webinars to discuss its proposals for a more inclusive Royal College of Pharmacy.

Each webinar has a particular focus, but everyone is welcome to attend:

- **Tuesday 24 February, 6–7pm** – To focus on pharmacy technicians across the UK
- **Tuesday 3 March, 7–8pm** – To focus on specialist professional groups across the UK
- **Wednesday 4 March, 1–2pm** – To focus on pharmacist and pharmacy technician students and trainees across the UK

Stress management and building resilience workshop – facilitated by Pharmacist Support.

Alongside critical work making the financial case for the sector, Community Pharmacy England will be working with **Pharmacist Support** in 2026 to help support the wellbeing of pharmacists and their teams.

- **Thursday 26th February 2026, 7.15pm – 9pm - Online**

This workshop explores wellbeing and looks at how to build resilience. It provides techniques for dealing with feelings of pressure including cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and encourages participants to identify and build on strengths.

National News/Reminders

Pharmacy Pressures Survey 2026: Your responses help secure our future.

Community Pharmacy England (CPE) has launched its fifth annual Pharmacy Pressures Survey and are keen to hear from all pharmacy owners and staff.

The survey is crucial for monitoring the health of the sector. Its findings provide clear evidence of the realities facing community pharmacy. We know that being asked for feedback every year can feel repetitive, but the enormous response we receive is invaluable: it captures what is needed to continue pushing for vital changes, using the latest evidence to strengthen our case and support the sector.

Pharmacies urged to be alert to GDPR themed scam emails.

CPE is aware of a recent increase in scam emails being sent to community pharmacies. Some of these messages falsely claim that the pharmacy is under investigation for a data protection or GDPR compliance breach.

Dispensing Factsheet- Exemptions from the prescription charge.

This factsheet serves as a guide of the categories of exemption from NHS prescription charges and provides details of the evidence required to prove entitlement to free NHS prescriptions where applicable.

New patient-facing website to promote NHS pharmacy clinical services.
CPE have launched a patient-facing website, designed to promote the Pharmacy First, Hypertension Case-Finding, and Pharmacy Contraception Services.

The website (**communitypharmacy.org.uk**) can be used by other healthcare providers such as GP practices and by LPCs to provide information on these services and direct patients to pharmacies in England that offer them via the NHS website.

FSA recall: Aptamil First Infant Formula (Nutricia Ltd) – Updated.
Article updated to include additional products/batches.

Reminder - **National Pharmacy First Campaign.**
As part of the **Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) 2025/26** pharmacy contractors are required to take part in two national health campaigns promoting the Pharmacy First service to the public.
The second campaign runs from **2 - 22 February 2026**.

Reminder - PQS - Declaration window is open.
The declaration window for the Pharmacy Quality Scheme (PQS) 2025/26 is now open. Pharmacy owners can make a claim for a PQS payment up to **11.59pm on Friday 27 February 2026** through the MYS portal.

Useful Links:
https://cpe.org.uk
Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs)
Alerts recalls and safety information: medicines and medical devices.
Drug Safety Updates.
Timelines for PQS Domains 2025/26.
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