Community Pharmacy BLMK & Northants

Fortnightly Newsletter – w/c 20 April 2026

This issue covers:

Local News:

- **New webinar** -Confused about legislation on Pharmacy Supervision? – **Online 28/4/26**.
- FAO Luton – CGL online session rescheduled – **23/4/26 19:00 – 20:30**.
- Community Pharmacy BLMK- N - Event Invite - **28/6/26 09:30 – 14:30**.

Training & Events:

- Technician Apprenticeship programme open from - **27/4/26 – 18/5/26**.
- NHS App webinar – online **30/4/25 11:30am – 12:30pm**.
- The Primary Care Show – **20 & 21 May.**
- Bringing Primary Care Together Conference – **21 & 22 June**.

National News/Reminders:

- NHS prescription charges.
- Annual complaints report.
- C-19 Vac – Spring programme VGD published.

Local News

New webinar – **Confused about legislation on Pharmacy Supervision?**
Join BLMK-N LPC and Jasmine Shah, Head of Advice & Support Services/Medication Safety Officer, from the NPA, for a live webinar on **Tuesday 28 April 8:00pm – 9:00pm**, with an update on the current position and to reduce the risk of misinterpretation. **Registration link**.

FAO Luton – **Update on CGL contract and Information Session.**
Due to unforeseen circumstances, the **Luton Pharmacy Restructure Information Session**, originally scheduled for 16 April 2026, has unfortunately been postponed. The session will now take place on **23 April 2026**, running from **19.00-20.30pm**. **New meeting link**
This session will provide an opportunity for feedback and contractors to ask questions. The session **is open to all Luton contractors**, including those who currently do not offer the service and would be interested in doing so in the future.

Community Pharmacy BLMK-N invitation to an event on Sunday 28 June 2026.
You are invited to One Team in Action: Strength, Strategy, Success—an event designed to help pharmacy contractors strengthen their business, empower their teams, and invest in their own wellbeing. To secure your place **Register** your place today!

Training & Events

Community Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship Programme 2026.
Applications for the Community Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship Programme 2026 will open between **27 April – 18 May**.
The programme supports pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians to be employed and complete their full 24-month apprenticeship training within a community pharmacy setting. Upon completion of training and registration with the General Pharmaceutical Council, pharmacy technicians will be able to support community pharmacy to utilise the expertise and knowledge of registered professionals as part of community pharmacy services and the wider healthcare reform.
Contractors can join national stakeholder engagement webinars to find out more, taking place at **12 - 12.30pm on 21 April** and at **8 - 8.30pm on 23 April.**

New webinar – **Confused about legislation on Pharmacy Supervision?**
Join BLMK-N LPC and Jasmine Shah, from the NPA, for a live webinar on **Tuesday 28 April, 8:00pm – 9:00pm**, with an update on the current position and to reduce the risk of misinterpretation. **Registration link**.

NHS App Webinar
Join the NHS App **webinar** on **30 April, 11.30am – 12.30pm**, for an overview of national activities and a walkthrough of the updated NHS App help content on NHS.uk and an introduction to the updated NHS App Training and Education Model.

The Primary Care Show.
Join over 5000 primary care professionals at The Primary Care Show on **20-21 May 2026** at the NEC Birmingham**.**

Bringing Primary Care together 21-22 June 2026 – National Conference Centre Birmingham.
This two-day event aims to bring together pharmacy and general practice leaders to explore integrated care, service innovation, workforce development, and practical ways to strengthen collaboration across primary care.

Community Pharmacy BLMK-N Event - One Team in Action: Strength, Strategy, Success – Sunday, 28 June 2026.
You are invited to One Team in Action: Strength, Strategy, Success—an event designed to help pharmacy contractors strengthen their business, empower their teams, and invest in their own wellbeing. To secure your place **Register** your place today!

National News/Reminders

NHS prescription charges remain at £9.90.

Pharmacy teams are reminded that the NHS prescription charge remains at £9.90 per prescription item for 2026/27. Community Pharmacy England (CPE) has produced posters to support community pharmacies in displaying the prescription charge.

Have you completed the Annual Complaints Report?

It is a mandatory requirement for all community pharmacies, including distance selling premises, to prepare an annual report on complaints by 31 March each year. You must send the information to the pharmacy commissioning team, and the report should also be available to anyone who requests it.

C-19 vac: Spring programme VGD published.

NHS England has authorised and published a vaccine group direction (VGD) for use in the Spring 2026 COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

Spring 2026 campaign bookings open.

Pharmacy owners are reminded that the public will be able to book COVID-19 vaccination appointments via the national booking service (NBS) from **7 April 2026** for vaccination from Monday, **13 April 2026**.

Reminder – New Medicine Service (NMS) providing the service offsite.

Pharmacy owners are reminded that they are not permitted to subcontract the New Medicine Service (NMS) to third-party, off-site providers. If they do, contrary to the Directions last year, they run the risk of recovery of the payment for these services by ICBs (through NHS England's Post-Payment Verification processes) and being found in breach of their Terms of Service with the NHS.

Income Support and Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance exemptions to end from April 2026.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will abolish Income Support and Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance from **1 April 2026**. Payments may continue for a two-week period so patients can still claim exemption from NHS prescription charges on these grounds until **14 April 2026**. After this date, these benefits will no longer provide a valid exemption for free NHS prescriptions.

Pharmacy owners with more than one premises: Do you know your NHS POC code?

Pharmacy owners have a Parent Organisation Code (POC) that identifies the overall business, while each pharmacy site has its own ODS code (F code). POCs group your premises; ODS codes identify individual sites. Please ensure both are correct. You may need to update POC links after buying or selling a pharmacy, ownership changes, or incorrect linking. Use the NHS Data Search and Export tool to check your POC and ODS details and contact the NHS National Service Desk if corrections are needed.

Detained estate EPS prescribing: medicines supply process update.
NHS England is updating the process for supplying medicines when people leave prison. The changes, aims to improve continuity of care and reduce pressure on community pharmacies and GP practices during a patient's first days and weeks back in the community.

Retrospective top-up payments – how it works.
In March 2024, it was **announced** that from April 2024 a retrospective top-up payment system for price concession lines will be implemented. This is an outcome from the Price Concession Review, which was agreed as part of the 2022/23 and 2023/24 funding settlement for Community Pharmacy. This was a major review of price concession systems, conducted in collaboration between Community Pharmacy England and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Updated factsheet: Free-of-charge (FOC) items.
CPE have updated their 'Dispensing Factsheet: Free-of-charge (FOC) items' to support pharmacy teams in identifying when items should be supplied free-of-charge on NHS prescriptions in England.

CPCF services and Terms of Service – Important dates.
Pharmacy owners are encouraged to regularly review this page to help you stay on top of critical deadlines and national service requirements in April 2026 and beyond.

New Look NHS App - What is changing?
Read the latest changes and updates to the NHS app.

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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