

Standard Operating Procedure: Delivering Medicines Safely During COVID 19 in Partnership with the Community and Voluntary Sector

Name of Pharmacy:

Prepared by: HSCB for use in community pharmacy during the COVID-19 pandemic period	Date of preparation: 09 April 2020
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Signature on behalf of Pharmacy:	Information is correct on date of issue; the SOP will be updated if there are major changes during the COVID 19 period

BACKGROUND

Increasingly patients are relying on home deliveries from pharmacies as social distancing measures are adopted to reduce social interaction between people in order to reduce the transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19). It is recognised that this extra demand is putting further strain on pharmacies to support their patients. It is important that patients, and particularly those most vulnerable, can be confident that they will receive their medicines.

The Northern Ireland community pharmacy network has been dealing with this surge in demand since early March and most have now already put measures in place to address the unique challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is intended that the arrangements within this SOP will complement existing services and fill gaps should they exist, as the impact of this pandemic continues to hit the community pharmacy network.

SCOPE

This SOP outlines the arrangements for community pharmacy, and Community or Voluntary Organisations coordinating volunteers to delivering on behalf of a community pharmacy, to ensure appropriate governance measures are in place for the safety of patients, pharmacy staff and volunteers, as well as the medicines to be delivered.

Medical gases are not within the scope of this SOP.

Community pharmacists should also follow their own delivery SOPs where relevant.

Volunteers must be registered with a local community or voluntary organisation who will work with the Community Development Health Network (CDHN).

The community or voluntary organisation must commit to ensuring volunteers are Access NI vetted, insured and supported to complete deliveries.

CDHN will ascertain and monitor demand from pharmacy, recruit community or voluntary groups to coordinate volunteers, link community or voluntary groups with a pharmacy/pharmacies, ensure community or voluntary groups adhere to the SOP and are supported to undertake this role.

Name of Community or Voluntary Organisation	Contact details

VOLUNTEER ORGANISATION RESPONSIBILITIES

1. GENERAL

- Recruit, review references and coordinate vetted volunteers
- Ensure volunteers are not from, or living with, any of the identified at risk groups
- Ensure volunteers have been suitably trained and completed the [Buttercups training](#)- training for additional delivery drivers to support pharmacy services during the pandemic
- Engage with pharmacy to confirm requirements and assign volunteer. The volunteer organisation will supply the name and address of the volunteer so the Responsible Pharmacist can check against their photographic ID upon arrival.
- Ensure volunteers adhere to volunteer responsibilities as set out in this SOP
- Ensure volunteers have a fully charged and working mobile available for any emergencies
- Ensure volunteers sign a confidentiality undertaking and maintain patient confidentiality during all deliveries.
- Follow up with volunteer's organisation regarding expenses sheet and feedback

COMMUNITY PHARMACY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. AGREEMENT WITH THE VOLUNTEER ORGANISATION COORDINATING VOLUNTEERS

- Agree arrangements for deliveries with organisation coordinating volunteers

2. IDENTIFYING PATIENTS FOR DELIVERY

Community pharmacists are asked to identify patients in accordance with normal practice, however, they may wish to consider items below.

- Consideration should be given to the option of appropriate alternatives to delivery such as collection by a neighbour, friend or family member.
 - Consider the patient's ability to answer the door or existing arrangements and consent for posting through the letterbox
- Use your professional judgement and take a patient centred approach to identify patients who need the delivery service e.g.
 - Shielding or self-isolating patients as per COVID19 guidance <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3124.htm>
 - Consider actively reviewing prescriptions ready for collection to identify the patients in these groups
 - Those who normally have medicines delivered
 - Prescriptions annotated as needing delivery by GP practice
 - Patients who contact the pharmacy directly (by email/telephone) and request a delivery
 - Patients who contact a participating community or voluntary organisation and request help with prescription deliveries if they meet the required criteria.
- Obtain consent for delivery
 - This can be written or in these circumstances most likely to be verbal; or implied if patient has requested via CDHN
 - As is normal practice, medicines can only be posted through the letterbox or left in an alternative safe place by prior arrangement with the patient. Written patient consent is advised. Options can be discussed and agreed with the patient about how to make sure the medicines are kept out of the reach of children or pets and document these; this will be included in protocol used by CDHN for patients requesting delivery.
- Annotate prescription with "For delivery" to ensure essential deliveries are not missed at this busy time.

- Consider recording delivery requests on patients' PMRs and the origin of the request e.g. patient/GP.
- If GP practices are identifying patients for delivery, consider asking if they can record the patient's phone number after asking patients for their consent to share with the pharmacy
- Dispense prescriptions as per normal SOPs
- Print an extra bag label for the delivery sheet ensuring a full address is recorded including the postcode
- Contact the patient by phone if possible, to alert them that their prescription will be delivered; if appropriate give a day and time period and advise that receipt will need to be witnessed by the volunteer.

3. PREPARING DELIVERIES

- A robust audit trail should be available to confirm successful delivery of the medicine to each person
- Prepare a delivery schedule for the volunteer (See separate sheet)
 - A bag address label can be used for patient details
 - Record the number of bags for each person or only to record if more than one bag
 - Complete the comments section e.g. if there are specific instructions for a patient e.g. post through the letterbox, frail – requires 5 mins to get to the door, leave on windowsill etc.
- Pharmacy to determine the number of deliveries for each volunteer, ensuring they can fit safely into the delivery container and volunteer's car boot.
- Sort the deliveries by locality
- Plan routes giving consideration to both patient and medication factors e.g.
 - those in self-isolation receive deliveries at the end where possible
 - fridge lines are delivered first where possible
- Put deliveries together in an appropriate container that can be cleaned on return
 - Items requiring refrigeration (2-8 °C) should be transported using an appropriate cool bag.

4. HANDOVER TO VOLUNTEER

- Check the volunteer's identification; driving license will be recommended
- Write the volunteer's name on the delivery schedule and sign in when they are ready for handover
- Complete prescriptions requiring the addition of fridge lines and CDs
- Decommission medicines by scanning aggregated barcodes (if not done during dispensing process).
- Provide the volunteer with gloves and hand sanitiser if available
- Provide a telephone number to ensure the volunteer can contact the pharmacist in case of urgent queries; consideration should be given to a second back-up number

- Identify a suitable area for handover of the deliveries to the volunteer and for the return of completed delivery sheets
- Maintain social distancing measures during handover
- Consider timing of handovers if more than one volunteer is picking-up

5. WHILE VOLUNTEER IS EN ROUTE

- Answer any telephone queries from the volunteer in a timely manner where possible
 - Volunteer has been advised to contact the responsible pharmacist if in doubt about ANYTHING during the delivery process.

6. WHEN VOLUNTEER RETURNS

- Receive completed delivery schedule and any undelivered prescriptions
- Sign out the volunteer
- Sign the Expenses Form provided by the volunteer organisation
- Clean equipment given to the volunteer
- The delivery record sheet will form part of the audit trail and should be kept in the pharmacy for at least 2 years. The community pharmacist may wish to make other appropriate records at this stage.

7. WHEN THE SERVICE IS STEPPED DOWN AFTER COVID 19

- Consider providing the volunteer with feedback/references via the volunteer organisation

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. GENERAL

- Have a fully charged and working mobile available for any emergencies
- Carry identification as required by your volunteer organisation
- Wear identification clothing if required and if provided by your volunteer organisation e.g. high visibility vests
- **Sign a confidentiality agreement, maintain patient confidentiality and adhere to data protection requirements at all times**
- **If you are in any doubt about ANYTHING during the delivery process please contact the Responsible Pharmacist. You will be given a phone number/s.**
- If the volunteer is using their own car or van for this role, they must make sure that their insurance policy allows for delivering medicines

2. INFECTION CONTROL

- Wash your hands or use sanitiser regularly between each drop off where possible and regularly in between e.g. before/after eating, before/after breaks, starting and finishing deliveries.
- Avoid touching surfaces that could be contaminated like doorbells, knockers, gates
- If you decide to use disposable gloves or a tissue when you ring the doorbell, remember to dispose of tissues and gloves properly and wash your hands or use sanitiser regularly.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eye.
- Keep a safe distance of at least 2 metres (approximately 3 steps) away from people.
- Clean equipment used during deliveries e.g. electronic devices, clipboard, pens, handles, surfaces within the vehicle.
- If you develop symptoms at any point of delivering medications, self-isolate immediately and contact the pharmacy so alternative arrangements can be made.

3. PICKING UP DELIVERIES

- The pharmacist will indicate where deliveries will be collected from in the pharmacy
- Show the pharmacist your identification
- You will be given a delivery schedule and the deliveries.
- Check that you have a package (or packages as indicated on the sheet) for each person on the list
- Some items may be fridge items but this will be indicated on the sheet

- Deliveries should be stored in the boot of your car ensuring the car is locked and windows closed at all times particularly when you are away from the car.
- Care to be taken to ensure that medicines and their packaging are not damaged in transportation.
- Prescription bags should not be opened under any circumstances
- Wear the gloves provided or use hand sanitiser as indicated below

4. CARRYING OUT THE DELIVERIES

- Record your starting mileage on the delivery schedule
- Plan your route based on the schedule directed by the pharmacist
- On arrival, check the street name and house number against the details on the printed address label on the prescription bag
 - Remember to check the number of bags on the sheet
 - Remember to check if any items will be in the fridge bag
 - Check for any special delivery instructions for the specific patient e.g. Patient may take longer to answer door
- Leave medicines package/s at door or other visible place if required e.g. windowsill for patients who have difficulty bending down as indicated on the delivery sheet
- Wearing gloves, knock/ ring bell and move 2 metres away from the door (approximately 3 steps)
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is only required for close patient contact, within 2 metres.
- Upon answering ask the person if they are expecting a deliver and if so who for. Check the name matches the name on your list, then double check address with them. Raise any concerns with the pharmacist if unsure. Wait until you have witnessed that the medicine has been received by the patient/representative.

Never give a prescription to someone if you have any doubts, concerns or fears.
- If the prescription is not received after 2 attempts of knocking the door, or on following any specific delivery instructions from the pharmacist for that specific patient e.g. may need 5 mins to get to the door, retrieve the package
- Clean hands if hand sanitiser is available
- Record time of drop off on Delivery Record Sheet
 - Or record that prescription could not be delivered
- When delivery has been made or attempted at all addresses return to the pharmacy
- Unused or unwanted medicines returns from patients should NOT be accepted at this time i.e. medicines that would normally be returned for disposal
- If the patient has empty oxygen cylinders, record on the delivery sheet and alert the pharmacist on return

5. ON RETURN TO PHARMACY

- Record your finishing mileage on the delivery schedule
- Check that the delivery schedule has been appropriately completed
- Record your mileage on the Expense Form provided by your organisation
- Hand to the pharmacist for their signature
- Hand over the delivery schedule, delivery container/s and any packages that could not be delivered
- Advise the pharmacist of any discrepancies or concerns relating to the deliveries or processes
- Maintain social distancing during this process
- Remember to complete infection control measures e.g. washing your hands when you can, disposing of gloves and cleaning the inside of your car (See section 2 above for further detail)

REFERENCES

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) standard operating procedure: Community Pharmacy. NHS England. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/Novel-coronavirus-COVID-19-standard-operating-procedure-Community-Pharmacy-v2-published-22-March-2020.pdf> [accessed 26 March 2020]

Community Pharmacy COVID-19 FAQs. HSCB and Department of Health. Available at: <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/Community%20Pharmacy%20COVID19%20FAQs.pdf> [accessed 26 March 2020]