

Pharmaceutical Society NI statement on collection and delivery services during the Covid-19 pandemic

09 April 2020

We recognise that, during the Covid-19 pandemic pharmacies may have to work differently including in relation to getting medicines to patients.

We note and recommend that pharmacists consider the Health and Social Care Board's publication, [Community Pharmacy Covid-19 FAQs](#), which has sections relating to collection and delivery services.

In addition to this information, pharmacists should consider the points on collection and delivery services, outlined below, which are in general accordance with our [Guidance on the Provision of Prescription Collection and/or Delivery Services](#).

Volunteer Support

During the current Covid-19 pandemic, pharmacists may decide to use volunteer support to help ensure a patient-centred approach in relation to delivery and collection services. Ensuring patients get the medicines they need is crucially important. It is a matter for pharmacists to determine if volunteer support is appropriate in each set of circumstances. The following points should be considered when deciding upon or reviewing the use of volunteer support in collection and delivery services.

1. **Put the patient first** – when considering collection and delivery services during the Covid-19 pandemic, do what is in the best interests of the patient.
2. **Make appropriate risk assessments** – always make decisions about delivery and collection services considering the risks involved and take steps to mitigate risks where possible. Before availing of volunteer support risk assessments should be carried out. All major decisions should be documented and recorded.
3. **Maintain suitable governance arrangements** – collection and delivery services, including the use of volunteer support, are the responsibility of the Responsible Pharmacist. In a body corporate, the Superintendent Pharmacist should maintain a systems approach and be aware, and have oversight, of the

services being delivered across an organisation during this time, including the use of volunteer support. Processes should be regularly reviewed in this fast-moving set of circumstances.

4. **Gain patient consent, where possible** – patient consent for collection and delivery services should be sought and given where possible. Good communication with patients, especially the vulnerable, is very important at this time.
5. **Maintain patient confidentiality** – consider how patient confidentiality can be maintained when developing and delivering alternative collection and delivery services.
6. **Maintain an audit trail** – consider how an audit trail for collection and delivery services can be maintained, with particular regard to ensuring medicines reach patients.
7. **Protect staff and those providing delivery and collection services** – consider procedures for staff and those providing delivery services during the Covid-19 pandemic, taking account of the latest Government advice.

This document should be read in the context of the following statements:

[Joint Regulators Statement Covid-19 - 03 March 2020](#)

[Joint statement from GPhC and Pharmaceutical Society NI – 18 March 2020](#)

[Clarifying Statement – Regulatory Approach – 08 April 2020](#)