

TO ALL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS IN NHS LANARKSHIRE
PLEASE SHARE WITH LOCUMS AND SUPPORT STAFF AS APPROPRIATE

In the past few weeks the number of unplanned closures or restriction in hours from community pharmacies has decreased and this is, of course, very welcome.

It is still important that we plan for this situation and, together with Community Pharmacy Lanarkshire, we have agreed the following plan which we are now implementing.

It is also worth noting that we are expecting further national guidance and if and when that comes this plan will be revisited. It will also be reviewed in light of experience.

The key points are:

1. The context is that pharmacies will only seek to close or restrict hours as a last resort.
2. Pharmacies should have a Business Continuity Plan in place which they identify actions they need to take to ensure continuity of care for patients who have a particular reliance on their pharmacy and may be affected by an unexpected closure. Obvious examples will include patient receiving ORT for addiction, “special” unlicensed medicines which may be difficult to obtain, and patients requiring dosetted medication. These are only examples and each pharmacy will have its own. That BCP should describe the actions which will be taken to secure care for such patients and clearly the mitigations required for a few hours of closure are more straightforward than a full day or more.
3. Our experience is that most unplanned closures can be managed where the closure/restriction in hours is
 - a. **Closure of 4 hours or less**
 - b. **Closure for no more than 2 days in a row**
 - c. **There is realistic access to services from other pharmacies.**
 - d. **Closure does not compromise limited access to late night service provision where the OOH service and public have an expectation of service.**
 - e. **The pharmacy has applied their BCP indicating how patients reliant on the pharmacy will be cared for**
 - f. **Suitable signs will be put in the pharmacy to let patients know when the pharmacy will reopen.**
4. We have therefore agreed that when criteria 3a-3f are in place we will automatically authorise a “last resort” closure/restriction in hours without the need to seek additional authorisation from the Health Board.

5. In addition, a key aspect for successfully managing the situation is timeous and accurate communication of when the pharmacy will close and will reopen and we are establishing a new system to enable comprehensive and real time communication which will work 7 days per week.
6. The way a pharmacy must communicate their temporary closure will be to send a single email to pcs@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk with the words **SHORT TERM AND TEMPORARY RESTRICTION IN HOURS OF A COMMUNITY PHARMACY** in the title. The email should then give:
 - a. Pharmacy Name
 - b. Pharmacy Address
 - c. Pharmacy Phone Number
 - d. Time when the pharmacy closed
 - e. Time when the pharmacy will reopen.
 - f. Short explanation.
 - g. The name of the person making the decision
7. NB This email will then be auto forwarded, in real time, to a broad range of partners including
 - a. Community Pharmacies in NHS Lanarkshire
 - b. General Medical Practices as appropriate
 - c. Locality Prescribing Advisers and General Practice Clinical Pharmacists
 - d. NHS 24 and NHS Lanarkshire OOH service
 - e. Hospital pharmacies
 - f. Addiction service
 - g. Community Nursing and Palliative Care Services
 - h. Locality social care services.
8. To enable the auto forwarding function to work in the most reliable way it is suggested that you cut and paste the title into your email and also use this only for the purpose of communicating short term closures because any other communications would also be autoforwarded.
9. It naturally follows that if a closure or restricted hours is anticipated for longer than the criteria above then prior authorisation should be obtained from the Health Board and initial contact should be via pcs@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk who will discuss with Christine Gilmour or Richard Shearer as appropriate. Christine/Richard can also be accessed by phone via the pharmacy office on 01698 752978.
10. This system will also be added to the NHS Lanarkshire section of <https://www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/nhs-boards/nhs-lanarkshire/> and the relevant site at Community Pharmacy Scotland. <https://www.cps.scot/unplanned-pharmacy-closures>

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