

Emailed to all Pharmacies in NENC

Email: [england.pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net)

Date: 14 December 2022

Dear Contractor

Community pharmacies are at the heart of local communities offering vital health services, advice and support to help people to stay well. They are currently making a huge contribution to the implementation of the ongoing vaccination programme.

NHS England requests that all contractors continue to provide services during their contracted opening times during the winter period generally, and specifically over Christmas and New Year.

NHS England specifically wish to remind contractors of the need to have **robust business continuity plans** over the winter period to best ensure patients, including vulnerable patients have continued access to services, throughout the winter. It is best practice that you include in your plans the information from “winter resilience Self Help Toolkit”, such as promoting self-care kits.

It is essential that upon any known delays to opening or decisions to close, you contact NHS England as soon as possible and also update your Profile Manager;

**NHS England:** [ENGLAND.Pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net](mailto:ENGLAND.Pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net)

**Profile Manager:** <https://www.nhs.uk/our-policies/profile-editor-login/>

### **Within Hours**

NHS England appreciates that there may be occasions where you are unable to open in line with agreed opening hours for reasons beyond your control (such as utilities interruption, flooding or fire). In these circumstances **the Terms of Service require that you notify us (even if the closure was for a short period)**, provide patients with advice on alternative options and use all reasonable endeavours to resume service provision as soon as is practicable.

### **Out of Hours**

In relation to reporting out of hours closures, any incidents should be reported first on-call via;

- North East contractors - North East Ambulance Service on 0191 4302453
- North Cumbria contractors - North West Ambulance Service on 01772 867761

## **Bank Holidays and normal working days across the festive period 2022/23**

This is to remind you of holiday arrangements over the forthcoming festive period and during 2023.

**Normal working day** - Where listed below as a normal working day, pharmacies must open their usual opening hours (unless agreement from NHS England to close).

Note - Requests to temporarily amend core opening hours should have been submitted by mid-September and it is now too late to request a change. Requests to temporarily amend supplementary opening hours require 5 weeks' notice to NHS England and it is now too late to submit such notifications for the Christmas period.

**Bank Holiday** – Where listed below as a Bank Holiday, pharmacies are able to close without formal application or notice. It is to be noted that if you have been directed to open as per NENC rota you must open.

### **Please check the rota to ensure you are aware of your Pharmacy's directed hours.**

Saturday 24 December	Christmas Eve	Normal working day.
Sunday 25 December	Christmas Day	Bank Holiday
Monday 26 December	Boxing Day	Bank Holiday
Tuesday 27 December	Lieu day for Christmas Day	Bank Holiday
Saturday 31 December	New Year's Eve	Normal working day.
Sunday 1 January	New Year's Day	Normal working day.
Monday 2 January	Lieu day for New Year's Day	Bank Holiday

If you have amended any opening hours over the Christmas period (including the two Eves) on the Profile Manager, but have not submitted either a Supplementary Hours notification or a change of Core Hours application and have not received written approval from NHS England, you **must** open for usual trading and will therefore need to reinstate your entry to usual trading.

If this applies to you and you close your pharmacy without prior NHS approval, you are in breach of your Terms of Service; which may result in formal sanctions being taken against you.

Please ensure that you provide accurate information via your profile manager with regards to your opening hours during bank holidays, as required by the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013, 35 (1) (b) (i).

Advice and support are always available from your local commissioning team and from your Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC). If you require details of your local representative, please contact us and we will provide these.

If you have any questions or queries in relation to the above or if you require templates, please do not hesitate to contact the team

Yours sincerely

**Kenneth Youngman**  
**Senior Primary Care Manager**  
**Pharmacy Commissioning Team (North East and North Cumbria)**