

## **In this Bulletin:**

- Expanding the Primary Care Workforce
- Roll Out of Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) Phase 4
- Urgent PPE Support
- Temporary residents and travelling patients
- August Bank Holiday

## **Expanding the Primary Care Workforce**

Last week NHSE and NHSI published a [letter](#) to GPs and CCGs about securing additional GP capacity and support the expansion of MDTs amongst other key points. Whilst the additional roles are aimed at CCGs and their responsibility to help PCNs recruit, it is important for GP practices in that it should help with any backlog of unmet health needs that have resulted from the pandemic, address the workload challenges, and support the return of normal day-to-day activity to pre-pandemic levels.

Crucially, it should help to expand the flu vaccination programme, which general practice is finding considerably challenging to plan for this year, especially with the known unknowns about the additional cohorts. At QCS we have a useful [flu planning checklist](#) to help practices prepare for this years flu campaign.

## **Roll Out of Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) Phase 4**

NHSE and NHSI are also speeding up the rollout of EPS Phase 4 which allows EPS to be used for patients without a pharmacy nomination and all TPP SystemOne and EMIS Web practices, who are using EPS (including dispensing practices), will be live with Phase 4 from 7 September 2020.

Practices should enable Phase 4 in the next couple of weeks and going through the support materials and [EPS Readiness Checklist](#) will help.

The benefits include not having as many prescriptions to sign by hand and should minimise the number of lost prescriptions. It will also be much easier to track the status of a larger number of prescriptions using the [EPS Prescription Tracker](#).

Using EPS with a nomination is of course still the most effective option, especially during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, so practices should keep encouraging patients to nominate.

EPS Phase 4 is not currently available for Vision or Microtest systems.

## **Urgent PPE Support**

Urgent PPE support from the National Supply and Distribution Response (NSDR) service is now available from 7am on Monday to 10pm on Friday only, due to a decrease in emergency orders.

The NSDR can still be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 0800 915 9964 but PPE requests will only be dealt with Monday – Friday only.

Practices still need to ensure they have sufficient supplies of PPE, especially since additional gloves, masks and aprons will be needed during the flu clinics.

## **Temporary residents and travelling patients**

There has been some activity on social media about how patients should be managed if they would usually be treated as TRs whilst on holiday within England. The guidance has been established that the patient should contact their usual practice for an initial telephone consultation. If a primary care face to face consultation is required, the patient should be directed to register as a temporary resident.

Full information from the BMA is [here](#) and there may be local variations.

## **August Bank Holiday**

NHSE and NHSI does not expect GP practices to be open during the next bank holiday (on Monday 31 August), as long as there isn't a local lock down or an arrangement in place agreed with their local CCG.