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## **PSNC Briefing 010/17: Updated NHS Identity Guidelines – NHS logo use by pharmacies**

The single NHS identity was introduced in England in 1999 to signpost people to NHS organisations and services and to help them identify information which has come from an official NHS source. The NHS logo is now instantly recognised and its application directly affects how patients and the public think and feel about the NHS.

In 2004, the Department of Health issued guidance on how pharmacies could use the logo and since then contractors have been encouraged to make appropriate use of the NHS identity in line with the guidance.

In January 2017 NHS England updated the guidelines on the use of the NHS Identity, including revised guidance for all primary care contractors who are commissioned under a primary care contract. Where pharmacy contractors choose to use the NHS identity, they must ensure that the revised guidance is adhered to when producing, updating or replacing designs; the same guidance also applies to general practices, optometrists and dental practices.

The NHS primary care logo is made up of two elements:

- the **NHS logo**; and
- a **descriptor line** – ‘Providing NHS services’ – which indicates that some, but not necessarily all of the services available from a primary care contractor are NHS funded.

The NHS logo, which forms part of the NHS primary care logo, is protected by law; it is a registered trade mark and is also protected by copyright. It must only be used by pharmacies on information relating to the NHS services they provide, and to signpost patients and the public to them. The new guidance explains where and how the NHS primary care logo can be used; the position and size of the logo; and use of the logo against coloured backgrounds.

The guidance also includes a range of best practice examples demonstrating the correct use of the NHS Identity on various materials and in digital applications.

### **Changes introduced in the new guidelines**

Several important changes have been made in the new guidance, when compared to the previous guidance for pharmacy use of the NHS identity, including:

- The old guidance provided two descriptor lines which could be used with the NHS logo – the ‘NHS services available here’ descriptor line is not included in the new guidance and it therefore should not now be used by pharmacies;
- The old guidance stated that pharmacies could only use the NHS logo on its own, i.e. without a descriptor line, on fascias and dispensing labels, where space restrictions meant it was not possible to incorporate the descriptor line. The new guidance states that due to the size of prescription labels, this is the only application where the NHS logo can be used on its own, if the NHS primary care logo won’t fit with the lettering at a legible size. The NHS logo should therefore not now be used on pharmacy fascias without the ‘Providing NHS services’ descriptor line;

- The old guidance gave examples of use of the NHS identity and descriptor line on various materials, including those where it is located in the bottom right. The new guidance expresses a preference for the NHS primary care logo to be positioned in the top right on information relating to the NHS services a pharmacy provides, and on materials used to signpost patients and the public to them. However, the guidance notes that this will not always be possible, if for example, a pharmacy's logo appears in the top right position; and
- On vehicles, a permanent sign incorporating the primary care logo can be used provided the vehicle is only used for your NHS service. If your vehicle has multiple uses, the guidance states that you should use temporary signage.

### Compliance with the new guidelines

NHS England has not issued specific guidance on when primary care contractors should comply with the new guideline, i.e. in circumstances where NHS identity use complied with the old, but not the new guidance. They have however issued the following advice to NHS organisations:

*Implementation of the updated NHS Identity guidelines should be gradual. There is no need to go back and change existing offline materials. You should continue to use them until they need to be replenished or replaced to ensure there is no waste.*

*When you produce new communications and materials, these would carry your new format logo and follow the updated NHS Identity guidelines.*

*However, you should aim to update existing digital channels, such as websites and social media accounts, by January 2018 as they are usually easier and quicker to change.*

### Accessing the guidelines

The link below will take you to the new guidelines on the NHS England website.

Any pharmacy contractor that wishes to use the NHS identity should ensure they read and fully understand the requirements before making use of the NHS identity.

Contractors who already make use of the NHS identity should read the updated guidance and then assess whether their use of the NHS identity meets the requirements of the new guidance and what, if any, changes they need to make to their use of the NHS identity to comply with the new guidance.

[Click here to view the updated guidance and best practice examples.](#)

If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information please contact [Zainab Al-Kharsan, Service Development Pharmacist](#).