



Briefing: 034/23:

November 2023

Briefing for general practice teams and staff at sexual health clinics: the NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service

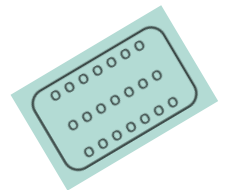
This Community Pharmacy England Briefing provides information for general practice teams and staff at sexual health clinics on the Pharmacy Contraception Service (PCS) which was commissioned from pharmacies from 24th April 2023 and has recently been updated.

Aims of the service

The aim of the PCS is to offer greater choice from where people can access contraception services and create additional capacity in general practice and sexual health clinics (or equivalent) to support meeting the demand for more complex assessments.

Brief overview of the service

- This NHS service involves community pharmacists initiating oral contraception (OC) and providing ongoing monitoring and supply of routine oral contraception.
- The supplies will be authorised via a Patient Group Direction (PGD), with appropriate checks, such as the measurement of the person's blood pressure and body mass index (BMI), being undertaken, where necessary.
- The consultation will be provided by the pharmacist, except for BMI and blood pressure measurements, which may be conducted by suitably trained and competent pharmacy staff in advance of the pharmacist consultation.
- The service will be provided face-to-face (in the consultation room at the pharmacy) or remotely, where the individual requests this and the pharmacist assesses it is clinically appropriate, by telephone or live video link.



What notifications will be sent to general practice and how will these be sent?

If the person provides consent to share the outcome of the consultation with their general practice, the following information will be shared: patient and pharmacy details; date of consultation; blood pressure reading (where applicable); BMI (where applicable); quantity and name of medicine supplied; consultation outcome and if applicable, why no supply was made.

The notifications will be sent via NHSmail or other secure digital mechanism.



Can general practice and sexual health clinics refer people to the service if they are requesting an appointment to initiate an OC or they are requesting repeat supplies of their OC?

Yes. The service can be offered directly to people presenting in the pharmacy or by receiving signposted referrals from local general practices and sexual health clinics (or equivalent).

Is the pharmacy able to provide the service for all the hours that the pharmacy is open?

Each pharmacy owner will identify the hours and/or days they will provide this service. The pharmacy's NHS website profile will be updated to indicate that the service is provided and pharmacies may confirm the availability of the service with local stakeholders as part of local conversations if they intend to receive referrals.

Is there a formal referral route to refer these individuals to the service, as there is for general practice in the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS)?

No, individuals do not need to be formally referred, they can be signposted to a pharmacy offering the service. The reason for this is that pharmacies can offer this service to people presenting in the pharmacy, so they do not need to have been referred to access the service. However, for the CPCS, a formal referral is required (from GP practices or NHS 111) for people to access the service, as pharmacies are not allowed to offer it to patients who walk-in for advice.

Is there any additional information that needs to be sent with a referral for these individuals to the service?

If the individual had previously been initiated on OC in a sexual health clinic and no record of supply was shared with the person's general practice, then it is recommended that a referral is made to the pharmacy using NHSmail.

The referral should include information about the OC previously supplied to allow the pharmacist to provide continuity of supply. However, there is no need to provide this information for referrals from general practice, as the pharmacist will be able to confirm any previously initiated OC via the individual's National Care Record.

What happens if the pharmacist has a clinical concern or is unable to provide an OC?

If a supply of OC is not deemed clinically appropriate, the pharmacist will explain why this is the case to the person and refer them to their general practice or sexual health clinic (or equivalent).



Is there any information that pharmacies may find useful to support their provision of the service?

As part of the consultation, the pharmacist will have a discussion with the individual regarding alternative and more effective forms of contraception including promotion of Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC). It would be helpful for pharmacies to understand where individuals requiring LARC can be referred to and to have some indication of how quickly people are seen when referred to the service.



Is there a plan to develop the service to allow pharmacists to provide other contraceptives?

Yes. NHS England plans to pilot community pharmacists providing ongoing monitoring and management of repeat LARCs, excluding intrauterine systems and intrauterine devices and also the initiation of LARCs.

Further information on the Pharmacy Contraception Service can be found at cpe.org.uk/pcs.

If you have any queries or require more information, please speak to a participating local pharmacy or contact: services.team@cpe.org.uk.