



## Briefing for pharmacy teams – the Pharmacy Contraception Service

This Community Pharmacy England Briefing provides information for pharmacy teams on the Pharmacy Contraception Service (PCS) and it replaces the previous briefing on the service (Briefing 033/23).

The service was originally commissioned in April 2023 and from 29th October 2025, oral emergency contraception (EC) will be added to it.

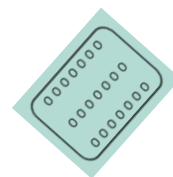
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### Aim of the service

The main aim of the PCS is to offer greater choice across England from where people can access free oral contraception (OC) and oral EC.

### Overview of the service

- In addition to initiating oral contraception (OC) and providing ongoing monitoring and supply of routine OC, the service will shortly provide oral EC to individuals of childbearing age to reduce the risk of pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse (UPSI) or where regular contraception has been compromised or used incorrectly.
- Medication supplies are authorised via Patient Group Directions (PGD) and there are two new PGDs for levonorgestrel and ulipristal which are being added for the new oral EC part of the service.
- The service must be provided by a pharmacist or a pharmacy technician face-to-face in the pharmacy consultation room or remotely (either by telephone or live audio/video link).
- From 1st October 2025, distance selling premises pharmacies (DSPs) will no longer be allowed to provide face-to-face consultations with patients present at the pharmacy premises, but they can provide the service via remote consultations.
- Where measurements of blood pressure or Body Mass Index (BMI) are needed, these can be undertaken by trained staff members in advance of the consultation.
- The service can be highlighted to people collecting NHS prescriptions for OC, so they have the option to use it when their prescription is running out.
- An OC consultation may also be offered following a consultation for oral EC.
- People may also be signposted to the service by general practices, sexual health clinics or other NHS organisations.
- With the individual's consent, information relating to the consultation will be shared electronically with their general practice.



- Pharmacy owners must have a standard operating procedure (SOP) in place for this service and all pharmacy staff involved in the provision of the service must be familiar with and adhere to the SOP.

## Frequently asked questions

### Q. What role can I play in the service?

The whole pharmacy team can be involved in promoting this service and can recruit people to the service. Pharmacy team members can also be involved in agreeing the date and time of the person's consultation. When doing that, you should consider the individual's immediate needs, e.g. do they urgently need a supply of oral EC? Suitably trained and competent pharmacy staff can also provide BMI and blood pressure measurements.



### Q. Why is oral EC being added to the service?

This is to provide a consistent offer and consistent access from community pharmacies across England to free oral EC. This removes the current variation in access to the service across the country.

### Q. Is there an age restriction for oral EC?

There will be no age restrictions within the national service that will prevent supply; the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England want it to be an 'open' service which helps reduce health inequalities.

### Q. Are the training and competency requirements for pharmacy technicians to provide the service the same as those for pharmacists?

Yes. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians providing the service must evidence their competence to provide the service and the service specification provides guidance on the recommended training.



### Q. Can someone request the service on behalf of an individual who is not present at the pharmacy?

No. Consultations can only be undertaken with the individual requesting the supply of contraception.

### Q. Can someone request just-in-case or advance supplies of oral EC?

No. Advance supplies of oral EC are not allowed under the service.

### Q. What can I do if our regular pharmacist or pharmacy technician is not at the pharmacy and we are unable to offer the service?

Your pharmacy's business continuity plan should include actions that you should take if you are unable to offer the service. This should include guidance on where you can signpost an individual to so they can obtain a supply of OC or oral EC where required.

### Q. When does the expanded service start?

The expanded service is planned to commence from 29th October 2025.

Further information on the Pharmacy Contraception Service can be found at [cpe.org.uk/pcs](https://cpe.org.uk/pcs).

If you have any queries or require more information, please email: [services.team@cpe.org.uk](mailto:services.team@cpe.org.uk)