



Briefing: 004/26: Pharmacy bank holiday opening hours in the remainder of 2026 and in 2027.

This Community Pharmacy England Briefing provides guidance for community pharmacy owners on the Terms of Service opening hours requirements around bank holidays for 2026 and the remainder of 2027.

2026

Name of holiday	Date in 2026	Day of the week
Good Friday	3 rd April 2026	Friday
Easter Sunday	5 th April 2026	Sunday
Easter Monday*	6 th April 2026	Monday
Early May bank holiday*	4 th May 2026	Monday
Spring bank holiday*	25 th May 2026	Monday
Summer bank holiday*	31 st August 2026	Monday
Christmas Day	25 th December 2026	Friday
Boxing Day* (Substitute Day**)	28 th December 2026	Monday

2027

Name of holiday	Date in 2027	Day of the week
New Year's Day*	1 st January 2027	Friday
Good Friday	26 th March 2027	Friday
Easter Sunday	28 th March 2027	Sunday
Easter Monday*	29 th March 2027	Monday
Early May bank holiday*	3 rd May 2027	Monday



Spring bank holiday*	31 st May 2027	Monday
Summer bank holiday*	30 th August 2027	Monday
Christmas Day	25 th December 2027	Saturday
Christmas Day (substitute day**)	27 th December 2027	Monday
Boxing Day* (substitute day**)	28 th December 2027	Tuesday

*These are not specifically mentioned by name in the Regulations, but because they are official 'bank holidays', they are covered by the Regulations.

**Substitute day declared bank holidays, when Christmas Day and Boxing Day fall on a Saturday and a Sunday, in 2026 & 2027.

When 26th December (Boxing Day) falls on a Saturday and a Sunday, these days are classed as normal working days for the purposes of community pharmacy opening hours, and substitute bank holiday days are allocated. Pharmacies must open for any core and supplementary hours on 26th December as the bank holiday is allocated on another day.

Terms of Service requirements: NHS website profile and Directory of Service profile

Pharmacy owners must ensure that their pharmacy's [NHS website profile](#) and [DoS profile](#) are accurate and up to date. In addition, pharmacy owners must ensure they verify the profiles at least once each quarter* using the [NHS Profile Manager](#). This includes updating information on opening hours for bank holidays, Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. Pharmacy owners are encouraged to do this as early as possible for any holiday period.

Even if no changes have been made, pharmacy owners must still verify the information contained in their NHS website profile and DoS profile, at least once each quarter*, as a [requirement for the Terms of Service](#).

*Financial quarters are 1st April – 30th June; 1st July – 31st August; 1st September – 31st December; and 1st January – 31st March.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I close my pharmacy on the holidays listed in the tables?

Yes. Pharmacy owners can close their pharmacies on days which are specifically mentioned in the Regulations (namely Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday) or a day which has been designated as a 'bank holiday' unless directed to open by the relevant ICB.



2. What about my core contractual hours?

A pharmacy will be treated as having been open for its usual hours on the holidays specified above for the purpose of counting the core contractual hours that week. Therefore, the pharmacy can be closed on the days indicated without giving notice or applying to change the core hours.

3. Are there any circumstances when I must open on these days?

Yes, if a pharmacy owner has been directed to open their pharmacy by the relevant ICB.

In 2026 and 2027, 26th December (Boxing Day) falls on a Saturday or a Sunday. If a pharmacy normally has opening hours on those days, it must remain open unless it has successfully applied to change those core opening hours, or has been notified of a change to supplementary hours.

4. Can I close my pharmacy early any other time?

Supplementary opening hours – You should give your ICB 5 weeks' notice of an intention to close early. This is not an application. Provided that you give 5 weeks' notice of a reduction in supplementary hours (or a change in distribution of supplementary opening hours), they may be reduced. The ICB could agree to the change with a shorter notification but usually will not do so.

Core opening hours – An application is needed, and the applicant must apply to the ICB under one of two tests. An ICB is required to consider and determine applications within 60 days, and any changes, if approved, may be implemented only after 30 days (from the date of approval).

Either:

Existing application route

The existing application route is defined in para 24(1) of Schedule 4 of the PLPS regulations, which applies to applications to reduce the total number of core opening hours, or to rearrange the existing number.

This route is a 2-part regulatory test, which is:

- First, whether the proposed changes to core opening hours maintain as necessary the existing level of service provision and, if not,
- Second, whether they will maintain a sustainable level of adequate provision in circumstances where this is unnecessary or unrealistically achievable.

This application route considers the needs of people in the area, and the opening hours and provision of pharmacy services by the applicant's pharmacy and other pharmacies in the area.

New application route

The new application route is defined in para 26(2ZB) of Schedule 4 of the PLPS regulations, which applies to applications to rearrange the existing number of core opening hours (the total number of weekly hours must remain the same).

This route has a single regulatory test, which states that NHSE (in practice, the ICB) must: *'... seek to ensure that the people who are accustomed to accessing pharmaceutical services at the pharmacy premises are likely to benefit from the changes because, overall, they would be more likely to access those services at those premises during the proposed core opening hours than during the existing core opening hours.'*

This application route considers the needs of people who are accustomed to accessing pharmacy services at the applicant's pharmacy, and the opening hours and provision of pharmacy services by the applicant's pharmacy.

If the application is granted, you may only make any change to core opening hours after 30 days.

More information on changing opening hours and what to include in applications is available on our [Opening Hours webpage](#).

5. Do I need to notify my ICB of opening intentions on bank holidays / public holidays?

Pharmacy owners are encouraged to tell their ICB if their premises will be open on Bank Holidays. To do this, pharmacies can update the NHS Profile Updater. Pharmacies should aim to do this as early as possible before a bank holiday. This information is of importance to the ICBs for the planning of pharmacy provision during holiday periods.



If the ICB is not able to determine sufficient pharmacy coverage, its options include issuing directions to one or more pharmacies, requiring them to open. This is not in the best interests of all concerned if there are other nearby pharmacies open.

6. What if Boxing Day or New Year's Day is on a Saturday or Sunday?

Pharmacy owners are reminded that if Boxing Day or New Year's Day falls on a Saturday or Sunday (and therefore is not a bank holiday), it will be classed as a normal working day for the purposes of community pharmacy opening hours. Therefore, pharmacies must open on these days for any core and supplementary hours.

If Boxing Day or New Year's Day are Bank holiday days, pharmacies do not have to open. If a substitute bank holiday day has been allocated for Boxing Day or New Year's Day, pharmacies do not have to open.

If you have any queries or require more information, please contact:

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