As you will be aware there are changes to the advice and support for shielded patients on the 31st July.  One of these changes is that the NHS Pandemic Delivery Support service which funded community pharmacy to ensure that shielded patients could access their medicines and funded pharmacies when a delivery was needed will also end.

We would appreciate you sharing this information with the relevant partners in your area so that they are aware of the change and also the key messages to patients regarding pharmacy deliveries.

Please see the key information below:

**Shielding Support from August**

·       As the COVID-19 lockdown eases and people can now go outside more, HM Government’s shielding support package will end on Friday 31st July 2020. This will also bring the national pharmacy medicines delivery service to a close.

·       This means that from 1st August 2020 community pharmacies will no longer receive any financial support from HM Government to help them to continue delivering medicines to patients’ homes, and many will no longer be able to do so.

**Advice for Patients**

·       Some pharmacies may choose to continue to fund a delivery service themselves, but this might be restricted to certain patients. Your local pharmacy will tell you if it is doing this.

·       The vast majority of pharmacies will need to stop providing free deliveries on cost grounds though.

·       Instead, patients are being advised to:

o   ask a friend or relative to collect their medicines for them;

o   call NHS Volunteer Responders on **0808 196 3646** (8am to 8pm) to arrange support; or

o   contact their pharmacy or their local council to find a local volunteer.

**Background**

·       Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak most community pharmacies were already offering some form of prescription delivery service, but it is important to note that many of these were not free of charge to patients.

·       Delivering medicines can create significant cost for pharmacies as it often means hiring delivery drivers and investing in equipment such as suitable vans.

·       However, there is no NHS-funded prescription medicines delivery service, so pharmacies have to cover these costs themselves.

·       HM Government funding cuts to pharmacies in recent years had meant that some pharmacies simply could not afford to keep providing delivery services for free: some needed to start charging patients for the services or cutting back on the number of patients who were offered free deliveries to prioritise those in most need of help.

·       The COVID-19 pandemic has increased pressure, including financially, on many NHS pharmacies and we do not expect that many, if any, will be able to continue to provide free deliveries of medicines to patients’ homes.

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