

# Pharmacy First – Operational Top Tips

This guidance should be read alongside the following checklists from Community Pharmacy England (CPE):

- Pharmacy owner checklist: [getting going with the Pharmacy First service](#)
- Pharmacist checklist: [getting going with the Pharmacy First service](#)

## Getting ready to provide the service

### Registering for the service

All pharmacies who wish to deliver Pharmacy First (including those who are delivering the Community Pharmacy Consultation Service) must register for the service via the [Manage Your Service Portal](#).

### Training

Consider the training needs for the whole pharmacy team:

#### Pharmacists

- Before accessing training support, you need to complete the [self-assessment framework](#) to identify your training needs
- [CPPE](#) has a range of learning resources to prepare and support pharmacy professionals to provide the NHS Pharmacy First service
- CliniSkills provides free on-line training for community pharmacists. Register on their [website](#) to access their on-line training material
- [VirtualOutcomes](#) has a series of modules to support pharmacists to deliver Pharmacy First. This includes a module for each PGD
- There are a number of other providers of paid for virtual and face to face training. Consider which type best supports your training needs. Links can be found [here](#).

## Training Support for Pharmacy Teams

- Consider any additional training or upskilling your team will need so they can support you to deliver the service. This includes services that other members of the team can complete if competent e.g. hypertension case finding service (all colleagues), Smoking Cessation and DMS (technicians)
- VirtualOutcomes has an overview module for pharmacy teams
- Hold a team meeting using this [briefing](#) from CPE, allow your team to ask any questions and raise concerns they may have

## Purchase of equipment

Consider any equipment you require to deliver the service. This includes:

- Infection prevention and control materials
- Otolaryngoscope and disposable tips (specula)
- Tongue depressors
- Penlight

## Workload review

- Consider any changes that may be required to the time of day that tasks are completed to manage workflow and queues to help reduce waiting times for walk-in Pharmacy First patients, and for those who are waiting for prescriptions or other services
- Determine how many consultations you would be able to complete each day. This should include all service provision e.g. contraception service, NMS, and smoking cessation service
- Make effective use of the dispensing team to ensure prescriptions are ready to check as the Pharmacist finishes a consultation. Use your ACT or Accuracy Checker (if you have one) to check wherever possible
- Regularly check PharmOutcomes or NHSmail for notifications
- Assign clear roles and responsibilities to members of the team for support at the counter and in the dispensary to distribute the workload
- Consider what changes you may have to make before the flu vaccination service starts to ensure that you can provide both services

## Waiting areas

- Do you have enough seating for patients who are waiting to see the pharmacist?
- Are you and your team able to give clear waiting times for patients who are waiting for a consultation or are waiting for a prescription?
- Can the time the patient is waiting be used to gather any useful information from the patient or to share important information with them? What messages can they see from the seating area?

## Phone lines

- Have you considered the number of phone lines you have available for patients calling the pharmacy following a GP referral, and will calls be answered in a timely manner?

## Locum Pharmacists

- When booking locums ensure they know that they will be expected to deliver the Pharmacy First Service, and that they should be service ready from the 31st of January 2024

## Providing the service

### Arranging appointments with patients

- Patients referred by General Practice will be advised to contact the pharmacy within 30 mins. If they do not contact the pharmacy within 2 hours you should attempt to contact the patient to arrange an appointment
- To manage the workflow agree a time for the patient to attend the pharmacy for a face-to-face consultation, or arrange a video call at a convenient time for the patient and the pharmacist

### Workload management

Don't forget the impact that the service may have on prescription waiting times and advise patients accordingly:

- Consider adding walk in patients to the prescription queue to help manage the expected waiting times or ask them to come back at a specific time

- If you make the decision to supply medication against the clinical pathways, complete your consultation on PharmOutcomes and print a blank FD10DT EPS dispensing token. Add the token to the prescription queue.
- Use the wider pharmacy team to optimise the dispensing workload while Pharmacy First and other clinical services are being provided
- Check PharmOutcomes regularly throughout the day

## Reviewing the service

Review the service with the whole pharmacy team at regular intervals post-implementation.

- What has been the impact of implementing the service?
- Are the activity levels what you expected?
- Do you need to make any further changes to your workload?
- Have there been any unexpected consequences?
- Does any of the team need any additional training?
- Do you need any follow up conversations with your local practice(s)?

If you need any further support, please contact us at [enquiries@gmlpc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@gmlpc.org.uk)

If you would like a member of the team to visit your pharmacy, you can book a visit by completing this [form](#).