



## Christmas 2026 opening hours

### Important actions for pharmacy contractors

Although Christmas is still several months away, now is a good time to start planning your Christmas opening arrangements, particularly if you are considering any changes to your Saturday opening hours.

This is a reminder of the contractual requirements for **Saturday 26th December 2026**, as this date often causes confusion.

### **Saturday 26th December 2026 is not a bank holiday**

Although Boxing Day falls on Saturday 26th December, the bank holiday is Monday 28th December 2026. This means that Saturday 26th December is treated as a normal Saturday for NHS community pharmacy contractual purposes. Pharmacies that would usually be open on a Saturday are expected to open as normal.

### **If Saturday forms part of your core opening hours**

If your pharmacy has core contractual hours on a Saturday and you wish to close on Saturday 26th December, you must submit an application at least three months in advance.

Please note that in order to maintain adequate pharmacy service provision for patients during this period NHS Greater Manchester has advised that applications to close on Saturday 26th December 2026 are not guaranteed to be approved.

### **If Saturday forms part of your supplementary opening hours**

If your Saturday opening is supplementary hours, you must provide at least five weeks' notice if you intend to reduce or remove those hours for Saturday 26th December.

### **Plan ahead**

Please review your Christmas opening arrangements now and ensure that any required applications or notifications are submitted within the relevant timescales.

**For further information:** please see Community Pharmacy England's briefing: [Briefing 004/26: Pharmacy bank holiday opening hours in the remainder of 2026 and in 2027](#)

This briefing explains the contractual requirements for opening hours over the Christmas and New Year period, including how the substitute bank holidays affect pharmacy opening obligations.