

16th April 2020 - Using Text/SMS – to Urgently Contact Community Pharmacies

Dear Colleague

Currently, our local Community Pharmacies are experiencing an unprecedented demand for their services. Community Pharmacies usually only have one telephone line. We recognise it can be difficult to get through on the telephone line and sometimes you may need to contact them in an emergency/urgently*.

This letter outlines a solution to how to flag the need for an urgent prescription to be dispensed. A possible interim solution is to send a text/SMS message from mobile phone to the Community Pharmacy landline (other solutions are being explored). This method is not for the public to use so please do not share with the public.

This is one potential solution, it is not the only option and may not work in all circumstances. Please ensure any urgent requests are followed-up accordingly.

The text/SMS will go through to the landline when the line is available/free, the Community Pharmacy will receive a phone-call and when they answer the landline the SMS message will be 'read' to them. If the land-line is engaged/busy the text/SMS sits in a queue and will be sent when the landline is clear/available.

Instructions for a mobile telephone:

- Go into the SMS/Text message function of the mobile phone
- Compose a 'New Message'
- In the 'to' box type in the landline number of the Community Pharmacy – including the area code
- In the 'message' section write:
**0# 1 Hour OR Same Day <please specify the level of urgency> Urgent Message. This is a message from <insert job title or company>. Please phone me on <insert number> regarding an urgent matter regarding a patient.*
- For example:
**0# Same Day Urgent Message. This is a message from NHS Vale of York CCG. Please phone me on 01904 555190 regarding an urgent matter*
- and press <send>. This will then send a message to the Community Pharmacy landline.
- The *0# at the start of the message ensure that you will be sent a 'delivery status' for your message, for example, ****STATUS**** Delivered. Message delivered to <landline number> at <date> and <time>.

Please **do not** send patient identifiable data via the SMS/text message. Please either provide the patient identifiable data verbally via the telephone when you speak to the Community Pharmacy OR send via secure NHS mail. Each Community Pharmacy has a secure NHS.net email address – for HCP use only.

For more information about sending text/SMS messages to landlines please see: <https://www.bt.com/help/landline/set-up-and-use-bt-text>

We ask that healthcare professionals do not misuse the system set-up, only using text/SMS message function in situations deemed urgent. You will need to specify the level of urgency in your text/SMS message – ‘1 hour urgent or same-day urgent’.

*We have defined the word ‘urgent’ in these circumstances –

‘Urgent 1-hour’ – *This would be when the healthcare professional needs a very fast response, within one hour, e.g. palliative care/end of life medicines.*

‘Urgent same day’ – *This would be when the healthcare professional needs a response on the same working day, for example, to ensure that a patient receives antibiotics for an acute infection.*

Improving Communication Between HCPs and Community Pharmacy

We have asked all GP Practices to provide a dedicated telephone line and dedicated email address for Community Pharmacies to be able to contact the GP Practice regarding urgent queries. We can provide lists of Community Pharmacy telephone numbers/email addresses if required. For any queries or more information please email:

VOYCCG.Rxline@nhs.net or nyccg.rxline@nhs.net

Many thanks for your continued support, cooperation and collaboration regarding these matters.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Tyrer - Chair NY Branch of YORLMC

Ian Dean (CEO) and Jack Davies (Chairperson) - CPNY LPC

Laura Angus – Head of Prescribing, NHS Vale of York CCG

Rachel Ainger – Strategic Lead Pharmacist, NHS North Yorkshire CCG