**Advice for using our community pharmacies during Covid-19**

**Using pharmacies during coronavirus**

Pharmacies have currently reduced their operating hours in order to allow time for vital ‘behind-the-scenes’ tasks to be carried out and to give staff some respite from the

demands upon them.

To support this approach some local branches have been closed to pool resources.

We all want to make sure patients, and particularly those most vulnerable, can be confident that they will receive their medicines.

To do this collectively, Key advice:

* There are sufficient medicines flowing through the system to meet the UK’s needs.
* Please only get the medicines you need **now** for you and your family; this will help to avoid creating difficulties for others, so that everyone in your community gets the medicines they need.
* If you take medicines for a long-term medical condition, please order your repeat medication in plenty of time before your current supply runs out, to avoid unnecessary delays.
* Look after your health by following public health guidance to stay home as much as possible, regularly wash your hands, and follow official advice about social distancing.

**Going to a pharmacy**

* Do not enter a pharmacy if you suspect you may have Covid-19 symptoms – this puts pharmacy staff and other patients and customers at risk
* Users of the pharmacy should be advised to keep a distance of at least two metres from other people to prevent droplet spread
* Our local pharmacies are all putting in measures to help maintain safety and social distancing

**Shielding**

* People who are shielding are not advised to go to community pharmacies at this time.
* The best option for people shielding is to ask someone you trust, like a partner or friend, to pick up your prescription from the local pharmacy on your behalf
* If you need support to collect your prescription, contact your local pharmacy to arrange a delivery or help you find a volunteer to deliver it.
* All NHS and Citylife Line volunteers used for prescription deliveries will have their IDs checked and be DBS approved
* Deliveries and collections can also be arranged for hospital specialist medication that is prescribed to you by your hospital care team.
* If you receive support from health and social care organisations, such as having care provided for you through the local authority or health care system, this will continue as normal.

**Collecting medicine for someone else**

* To support us in our local pharmacy services, relatives, neighbours and friends of the patient(s) are encouraged to collect and deliver medication on behalf of those in need where they are fit and able to do so.
* Where someone is collecting medicines on behalf of someone else, good practice would involve:
  + checking identification of the person collecting the items
  + maintain social distancing and hand hygiene whilst handing over the medication
  + phone ahead to inform the person of arrival and arranging where to put the medication
  + do not leave the medication unless they have seen that this has been received by the patient or representative, from a distance of >2 metres unless you live with them
* Citylife Line – if you are unable to have friends or family collect and deliver prescriptions, or make use of other delivery services, contact Citylife Line. Details of how to make an enquiry can be found [here.](https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/public-health-wellbeing-and-leisure/public-health-services/coronavirus-covid-19/citylife)

**Drug and alcohol support**

* If you have a drug or alcohol issue, speak to your keyworker who can help you understand any changes to accessing pharmacies.