

Belfast On-Call Pharmacy Service Specification

1. Introduction

The Belfast On-Call Pharmacy Service provides essential out-of-hours (OOH) pharmaceutical care for urgent prescriptions issued by BHSCT OOHs Centres, and to SEHSCT OOH Centres for patients living within the catchment area defined below. Participating pharmacies deliver on-call services on a rotating weekly basis to ensure patient access to necessary medicines outside of standard pharmacy operating hours.

2. Service Overview

- Rotational Cover: Each pharmacy contractor provides service for one week at a time, Friday to Friday.
- Service Access: Via BHSCT OOHs Centre and SEHSCT OOHs for patients residing in the Greater Belfast area. For the purpose of this service, this is defined as BT1 to BT20.
- Pharmacist Contact Details: On-call pharmacists must inform the OOH Centre of the telephone number they can be contacted on during their on-call period.
- Around 25 pharmacies within the service provision area are maintained on the rota

3. Service Process

Prescription Issuance

- The prescriber issues a prescription either at the OOH base or during a home visit.
- The prescription should be endorsed “URGENT” by the prescriber; this is not a prerequisite to supply but will aid the pharmacy in assessing urgency.

Communication with on-call pharmacist to arrange dispensing

- Patient/representatives should never be provided direct contact details to the pharmacist by the GP OOH centre
- To alert that a prescription requires dispensing the OOH Centre receptionist contacts the on-call pharmacist
- The pharmacist then calls the patient/representative to arrange a collection time at the pharmacy.
- If the patient/representative cannot be contacted the pharmacist should refer back to OOH centre.
- Prescription issued in patients’ home: The patient/representative calls the OOH Centre and provides details; the OOH then contacts pharmacy.
- For conversations around stock, clinical issues or arranging an Emergency Supply at prescriber request the contact must be prescriber to pharmacist

4. Service Participation & Requirements

- The SPPG will undertake periodic reviews of the On-Call Service, to ensure alignment with current service provision. Requests from contractors to participate in

the service will be assessed and approved by the SPPG in accordance with agreed criteria.

Participating pharmacies must stock:

- Oxygen
 - Oxygen regulator
 - Giving set
 - At least two oxygen cylinders (AF)
- Palliative Care Medicines as per the [Palliative Care Network](#); these will be funded and replaced by SPPG when expired as per the PCN arrangements.

It is not necessary for contractors to be within the PCN, simply to carry the same list of medications

5. Rota operation

The rota is prepared by SPPG covering approximately 6 months at a time and issued to Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland (CPNI) twice yearly, approximately two months prior to operation. CPNI manage the operation of the rota thereafter i.e. changes and swaps.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to arrange cover should they be unable to provide an on-call service on their allocated slot. Where contractors wish to swap an allocated on-call week or partial week, they must notify CPNI and all relevant Out-of-Hours (OOH) providers in advance. Responsibility for ensuring that all parties are informed rests with the contractors involved in the swap.

Key Dates & Fair Rotation:

- The following key dates have been identified as occurring during peak holiday periods:
 - New Year's Day
 - Easter Sunday
 - 12th July
 - Christmas Day
- Pharmacy contractors covering a week containing a key date will not be required to cover another key date week until all others have taken their turn.
- If a key day falls on a Friday, both pharmacies will be regarded as taking their turn.

6. Payment & Fees

- Core Funding: £2,100 per rota week
- Special Days: £500 per special day

Recognised Special Days

Payment for Recognised Special Days will be made only where a contractor is scheduled to provide on-call cover on the actual calendar date of the recognised day, as determined by the published rota.

Where a Recognised Special Day falls on a weekend, and an additional or substitute bank holiday is observed on an alternative weekday, payment will be made in respect of the original recognised day only. No additional payment, payment in lieu, or double payment will apply in these circumstances.

Payment will therefore not be duplicated where both the recognised day and a substitute bank holiday fall within the same period.

- Easter Saturday
- Easter Sunday
- May Day Eve
- May Day
- Twelfth Holiday Eve
- Twelfth Holiday
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day

7. Monitoring & Reporting

Weekly Activity Logs:

- On-call pharmacists must submit a weekly log of service activity via the [online reporting portal](#).

8. Notice Period

Contractors wishing to withdraw from participation in the On-Call Service must provide written notice to the SPPG. Unless otherwise agreed, contractors will be required to continue to fulfil all duties and commitments associated with the service until the end of the published on-call rota, or for a period of three months from the date of notice, whichever occurs first. Early release from rota commitments will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, subject to agreement with the SPPG and confirmation that appropriate alternative cover is in place.

8. Governance & Review

- The Belfast On-Call Pharmacy Service will be reviewed periodically to ensure service efficiency, patient access, and pharmacist workload balance.



- Changes to the rota system and payments will be communicated in advance to all participants.

9. Contact Information

For any service queries, pharmacists can contact:

- BHSCT GP OOH Centre - **028 9079 6220**
- SEHSCT GP OOH Centre - **028 9182 2344**
- SPPG Pharmacy Services:

Contact Details for Local Integrated Care Offices:				
Belfast	South Eastern	Southern	Northern	Western
12-22 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BS	12-22 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BS	Tower Hill Armagh. BT61 9DR	County Hall 182 Galgorm Road Ballymena BT42 1QB	Gransha Park House 15 Gransha Park Clooney Road Londonderry BT47 6FN
Tel: 028 9536 3926	Tel: 028 9536 3926	Tel: 028 9536 2104	Tel: 028 9536 2812	Tel: 028 9536 1082
pharmacyservicesbelfast@hscni.net	pharmacyservicesse@hscni.net	pharmacyservicessouth@hscni.net	pharmacyservicesnorth@hscni.net	pharmacyserviceswest@hscni.net