

TRAINING FOR ADDITIONAL DELIVERY DRIVERS TO SUPPORT PHARMACY SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

Protecting public health in the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak

As a medicines delivery driver, you have a vital role in delivering medicines to patients in need. You will be delivering medicines to patients who are being shielded from potential exposure to the COVID-19 coronavirus as they are most at risk of severe illness.

Hygiene

Good hygiene measures will help you to protect yourself and others. It is key to reducing the spread of the infection.

- **clean your hands frequently using soap and hot water, or use a hand sanitiser**
- **cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and throw away the tissue immediately. Use a hand sanitiser immediately after this**
- **clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, particularly at the start or end of a shift if other colleagues use the vehicle, e.g. the steering wheel, door handles on your vehicle and pens**



ACTIVITY

Find out if you will be supplied with hygiene products such as hand sanitisers for your role.

Social Distancing Whilst Delivering Medicines

Social distancing means maintaining a safe distance of at least 2 metres or 6 feet (around 3 steps) between you and others. This is key to reducing the spread of the coronavirus. It is particularly important in shielding at-risk patients from potential exposure to the coronavirus. It also applies when interacting with the pharmacy team.

You should avoid handing the medicines directly to the patient. You may be asked to leave it on the doorstep, ring the doorbell then wait for the patient to open the door whilst keeping at least 2 metres away.

It is important to recognise the symptoms of COVID-19 infection:

- **a new persistent cough**
- **fever**

You must not put patients at risk of exposure to the virus. If you think you have the symptoms, or if other members of your household need to self-isolate, you must let the pharmacy know.



ACTIVITY

Find out the latest guidance from your organisation and the NHS for social distancing whilst making deliveries.

Delivering Medicines Safely and Securely

Before you start delivering medicines to patients' homes, you need to be trained to carry out tasks safely and effectively. This is key to protecting patient safety and confidentiality. In the rest of this guide, we will look at your role of a medicines delivery driver, as well as the rules and regulations that you must follow.

You must recognise the limits of your role and refer all enquiries about medicines and prescriptions to the pharmacy team.

Patient confidentiality

It is a legal requirement to protect patient data and confidentiality. This means that **you should not:**

- discuss patient details with anyone except the patient without patient consent, including their family members and neighbours
- deliver the medicines to anyone other than the patient without patient consent
- leave the home delivery sheet with other patient details visible

Patient data includes sensitive information that will let you identify a patient, such as their name, address and date of birth. When referring to the pharmacist, make sure sensitive information cannot be overheard by other people.



ACTIVITY

Find and read your organisational policy on patient confidentiality.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are a set of rules that details how a particular task should be carried out. It must be followed by all staff members who carry out that particular task. It helps to ensure the task is performed to the same standard regardless of who has carried it out.



ACTIVITY

Speak to the pharmacy manager and find out which SOPs you need to be trained on before you start delivering medicines to patients' homes. The relevant SOPs can include the following. Record the date when you have read them and keep this record safe.

SOP for Task	Date
Collecting medicines for delivery from the pharmacy	
Storage of medicines during the delivery (in transit)	
Delivering medicines to patients' homes	
Dealing with unsuccessful deliveries	
Lone working	

Collecting Medicines from the Pharmacy

You should be familiar with the organisational SOPs for collecting medicines for delivery to patients' homes. Many pharmacies will use home delivery sheets but procedures may vary.

A home delivery sheet usually contains:

- **the names and address of the patients that you will be delivering to**
- **the number of packages for each patient**
- **whether there are items requiring special storage**

During this time, you may also require the telephone numbers of the patients you are delivering to, in order to help with social distancing during the deliveries.

You should always check that all of the deliveries listed on the delivery sheet are physically present for delivery before leaving the pharmacy. You may need to sign a copy of the delivery sheet to show that you have taken the packages out of the pharmacy. Any discrepancies must be raised with the pharmacy team.

You should plan your delivery route with the pharmacy team to ensure it is efficient and prioritises items with special storage requirements. You should stay in contact with the pharmacy whilst out on deliveries.

Remember all information on dispensed medicines is confidential. You have a legal duty to protect patient confidentiality.



ACTIVITY

Find out what paperwork is used in your organisation for tracking the progress of dispensed medicines that are delivered to patients. How should you organise the packages for delivery?

Items that require special storage in transit

The correct storage of medicines is extremely important. Unless otherwise stated, all medicines should be stored in a cool, dry place, out of direct sunlight. This helps to protect the quality of medicines to ensure they are safe to use.

It is important for you to recognise items that require special storage, often marked with a sticker on the bag. They are stored separately after dispensing in the pharmacy, so you need to make sure they are retrieved before you set off. There may be additional paperwork for them and you may need to plan your delivery route so that these items are given priority.

- **fridge items need to be kept cold from leaving the pharmacy to reaching the patient's home. They are usually kept in a cold box during delivery to protect the stability of the product. This is particularly important in warmer weather**
- **Controlled Drugs (often referred to as CDs) are subject to strict regulations that cover how they must be handled and stored. For some CDs, it is a legal requirement to keep them under lock and key, they may be stored in a locked box in your vehicle during delivery. Some CDs will require the pharmacy to make a record when they have been collected for delivery**



ACTIVITY

Find out how your organisation highlights items that require special storage. How should packages containing these items be stored during delivery and how do they get prioritised on the delivery route?

Delivering Medicines to Patients' Homes

Remember to maintain social distancing measures by keeping 2 metres away from other people.

! ACTIVITY

Find out what the pharmacy's opening hours are, and any arrangements made for the times that you can make deliveries.

During the pandemic, the way you may need to deliver a medicine could change. When making a delivery, you should always identify yourself, for example, "I am Peter from Buttercups Pharmacy and I am here to deliver medicines to Mr Upton." The pharmacy may provide you with a badge to help reassure patients that you are making deliveries on behalf of the pharmacy.

Check that you are at the right place by asking the patient or their representative to confirm their address or date of birth. Please refer to your organisation's SOPs.

Remember that you must protect patient confidentiality. You must not:

- **give the medicines to a person other than the patient without their consent**
- **leave the medicines with the patient's neighbour**
- **post the medicines through the letterbox, as this can be potentially harmful if the medicines are picked up by young children or pets. It can also breach patient confidentiality if it is posted through the wrong door**

Usually, patients will need to sign the home delivery sheet to confirm the receipt of their medicines. However, during the coronavirus outbreak, there will be revised procedures in place to ensure you maintain social distancing measures.

You may be asked to:

- **sign on the patient's behalf to avoid sharing pens**
- **put the medicines on the doorstep then ring the doorbell before stepping back and waiting for them to open the door and confirm their details**
- **put the medicines on the doorstep then call from outside and confirm the delivery over the phone, then wait while the patient retrieves the medicines from their doorstep**

If the patient has any questions about their medicines, they should be advised to call the pharmacy for advice. It would be helpful for you to have the pharmacy's telephone number on hand.

! ACTIVITY

Find out the procedure for delivering medicines. How do you confirm the patient has received the delivery and what paperwork do you need to complete?

Vehicle security

Some delivery drivers will be provided with a company vehicle to make deliveries, but many others are required to use their own vehicle. If you are using your own car or van for this role, you must make sure that your insurance policy allows for business use. In all cases, you should have a means of storing the deliveries within your vehicle in an organised way, for example, in different boxes.

Make sure that **each time you leave your vehicle** to carry out a delivery:

- **all of the windows are shut**
- **all of the doors are locked**
- **keep medicines out of sight and direct sunlight**
- **keep confidential information, such as home delivery sheets, out of sight**

You must not leave undelivered medicines in the vehicle overnight as it is not secure.

Dealing with undelivered medicines

In the case of unsuccessful deliveries, you must be clear on how to deal with the undelivered medicines. Many pharmacies will use a postcard system that is posted through the patient's letterbox, with details on the date and time of delivery, and usually with instructions on how to contact the pharmacy to rearrange delivery.

You will need to return undelivered medicines to the pharmacy, along with the home delivery sheet for their records. Deliveries of fridge items and Controlled Drugs should be made early in the day so that there is an opportunity to return them to the pharmacy for safe and secure storage where necessary.

You should not leave undelivered medicines in your vehicle overnight, as it is not secure, or adequate for items with special storage conditions.

! ACTIVITY

Find out the procedure for dealing with undelivered medicines, including items that require special storage. Does the pharmacy use a card to notify patients of a missed delivery?