

Approach to address discrepancies in supplementary and core hours between draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments and that held by NHS England Pharmaceutical Lists

Background

NHS England is responsible for maintaining and publishing the Pharmaceutical Lists, which includes information on the core and supplementary opening hours for each premise on the lists. For any changes to the core hours, the contractor must make an application, setting out the changes to the needs of people in the area of the Health and Well-Being Board (HWB), or other likely users of the premises, for pharmaceutical services that have led to their application. This application is to be considered by the Pharmaceutical services Regulations Committee (PSRC). For any changes to supplementary hours, the contractor must notify NHS England of the changes giving at least three months' notice. If the notice period for change of supplementary hours is less than ninety days, the contractor must set out their reasons for NHS England to consider whether it can agree to a shorter notice period. This is also considered by the PSRC.

Key Issue

As part of the process for Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments (PNAs), HWBs are likely to send a questionnaire to community pharmacy contractors which will include a question relating to their current core and supplementary hours. Where this has occurred, a large number of discrepancies have been identified between this information and the information on the Pharmaceutical Lists. This presents a problem for the HWB in terms of what information they base their assessment on, and potentially for NHS England if the PNA is based on information different to what it holds. This could result in an assessment that is fundamentally flawed.

Agreed Approach

1. HWBs are asked to compare the information they receive from any questionnaire against that provided by NHS England, and identify any discrepancies to the hours that the contractor actually opens when compared with the Pharmaceutical List.
2. Where the discrepancy relates to supplementary hours, the PSRC will accept this as notification of change to supplementary hours. This would normally be done as part of the report on the formal PNA consultation. The relevant Area Team would then notify the contractor so that there is an audit trail of this change.

3. Where the discrepancy relates to core hours, the relevant Area Team will follow this up with the contractor to either supply the confirmation of authority to change these core hours or to make an application as set out in the regulations. Until such an application is approved, the pharmacy will be required to open the core hours that are on the NHS England Pharmaceutical List.

Approved at NHS England London Region Pharmaceutical services Regulations Committee
15th October 2014