

Part VIA – Payment for Essential Services (Pharmacy Contractors)

England only

Reimbursement for PPE costs incurred within community pharmacy and dispensing appliance contractors (DACs) during the Covid-19 pandemic response

Background

1. Community pharmacies continued to operate throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Guidance was issued on 19 March 2020 to advise on operating model changes to reduce the risk of transmission <https://generalpracticebulletin.cmail19.com/t/ViewEmail/d/42D38571E307F65F2540EF23F30FEDED/07BD036C356575E57EEA1DAE616D4B3C>
2. In April 2020, Public Health England (PHE) guidance on PPE for community pharmacy recommended the sessional use of Type IIR fluid-resistant surgical face masks (FRSM) where pharmacy staff are unable to maintain social distancing of 2 metres from patients (with possible or confirmed COVID-19).
3. Community pharmacies were invited to sign-up to the PPE portal from 3 August 2020 as an emergency supply route and then for all Covid-19 PPE requirements from 21 September 2020.

Claims process

4. Claims must be submitted through the MYS portal (with the exception of central claims made for pharmacies with six or more branches), for PPE purchased between 27 February 2020 and 31 December 2020 for use in the delivery of NHS pharmaceutical services up to 31 March 2021, as a result of COVID-19 infection control guidance. All claims must be submitted by 12 February 2021.
5. Pharmacies with six or more branches may make a single central claim that must be submitted by email to Nhsbsa.pharmacysupport@nhs.net. However, this must be supported by appropriate evidence, using the assigned spreadsheet to show what PPE was sent to each branch together with a cumulative total. This is being allowed on an exceptional basis because this claiming process is being implemented retrospectively. Had pharmacies known about this claims process at the time they may have established their accounting systems differently.
6. The items that can be claimed are aprons, gloves, Type IIR masks and hand sanitiser. Between 27 February 2020 and 30 June 2020 any protective equipment used in substitution of unavailable items can be covered under standard claims. This includes visors. Where the standard claims amount does not cover the costs for standard protection, an exceptional claim should be made.
7. Each pharmacy will be able to make claims under two categories:
 - **standard claims** – set at a banded rate to cover standard PPE use from 27 February 2020 to 31 October 2020. However, this would not apply to pharmacies that were open for less than 90% of the time period, or that changed ownership during this time.
 - **exceptional claims** – to cover any PPE purchased between 27 February 2020 and 31 October 2020 in excess of the standard claim value and to be used up to 31 March 2021 and/or any PPE purchased from 1 November 2020 to 31 December 2020 and to be used up to 31 March 2021. Any pharmacies that were open for less than 90% of the time period from 27 February 2020 to 31 October 2020 or that changed ownership during this time period will also need to claim their actual costs via the exceptional claim route.
8. Distance selling pharmacies and dispensing appliance contractors will be eligible to claim the standard payment based on their dispensing volumes in the same way as bricks and mortar pharmacies. They will also be eligible to make an exceptional claim.

Standard claim criteria

9. Standard claims must meet the following criteria:
 - a. They must relate to costs incurred between 27 February 2020 and 31 October 2020;

- b. They must require the contractor to declare that -
- (i) their claim relates to PPE purchased for use in delivery of NHS pharmaceutical services and in accordance with PHE guidance,
 - (ii) they were open for at least 90% of the period in question (under their current ODS code), and
 - (iii) whether they opened for more than 60 hours per week on average over the period; and
- c. They will be paid at the claim amounts per Table 1. These amounts allow for:
- (i) Sessional use of masks for dispensing plus an allowance for clinical services, excluding flu vaccinations (covered under sessional use) at £30 per box of 50 masks (£0.60 per mask), and
 - (ii) One box of gloves per month for all pharmacies, one roll of aprons for February – October and hand hygiene for February – October.

Table 1. Standard claim bands

Band	No. items per month		Standard claim, <=60 opening hours	Standard claim, >60 opening hours
1	0	100	£830	£1,650
2	101	2,500	£830	£1,650
3	2,501	5,000	£1,030	£1,850
4	5,001	12,500	£1,640	£2,460
5	12,501	19,167	£2,490	£3,310
6	19,168		£3,240	£4,060

Exceptional claims criteria

10. Exceptional claims must meet the following criteria:
- a. they must relate to expenditure incurred during the period from 27 February 2020 to 31 October 2020 only where expenditure is in excess of the standard claim value or where the contractor has not been open for the requisite 90% of the period or has changed ownership;
 - b. they must be for expenditure with an invoice date up to and including 31 December 2020 and for PPE to be used up to 31 March 2021;
 - c. where they relate to expenditure incurred from 1 November 2020 to 31 December 2020, the contractor will be required to declare that they did not receive duplicative PPE from the portal during the same period;
 - d. contractors must confirm that they have documentation to evidence the value of their combined standard and exceptional claims and can make this documentation available on request; and
 - e. where they relate to PPE that is outside the standard list (aprons, gloves, Type IIR masks and hand sanitiser) the contractor must be able to evidence the need for that PPE if requested to do so. This evidence may take the form of a staff risk assessment or similar.
11. We intend to review the exceptional claims prior to payment on a sample/risk basis including checks of proof of purchase documentation, and, by exception, a clinical review of the appropriateness of the claim.

Additional Information

12. Where contractors have monthly dispensing volumes that apply to multiple claim bands, the mode average will be used to calculate payment. Where there are two modes, the higher claim band will be used.