

Supplies of Medicines in Luton during COVID-19 Crisis

Luton CCG Statement for LBC stakeholders

April 9th 2020

During this time GP surgeries and community pharmacies in Luton (and other healthcare teams) have been working exceptionally hard to continue to provide services to the people of Luton.

All partner organisations should be aware of the following advice to individuals:

Ordering repeat prescriptions from your GP – please only order what you need and your usual supply. Ordering prescriptions early or requesting extra medicines is discouraged. Patients over-ordering inhalers has led to a national shortage. All GP practices in Luton are limiting the number of patients that physically attend the practice, with most patients being offered a digital service. On this basis where possible, patients should order their repeat medicines online. Prescriptions can be sent electronically to a nominated pharmacy of your choice so you do not need to attend the surgery.

Pharmacy Opening Hours – these may change from normal working hours due to staff sickness or other workload pressures. If opening hours are altered a sign will be placed on the pharmacy door providing information about how to contact the pharmacy if urgent help is needed.

Pharmacy Access – please only go to the pharmacy if urgent, and respect social distancing requirements during your visit. Do not go to pharmacy if you have symptoms of COVID 19 but follow advice on NHS 111 online.

Prescribed Medicines deliveries – pharmacies are prioritising deliveries to the most vulnerable groups. If possible please ask a member of your family or friend to collect medicines on your behalf. We hope that a national service for deliveries will be available soon and are pursuing local opportunities to support pharmacies to deliver essential medicines. If you or your carer are not able to collect your medicines from your pharmacy please contact the council on this number 01582 547659.

Over the counter medicines – there has been a shortage of paracetamol nationally. In Luton, most pharmacies now have stock and paracetamol is also available in supermarkets and grocery stores.

Methadone and Buprenorphine prescribing - information from local Drug and Alcohol treatment Service

In order to help everyone stay safe, ResoLUTiONs have changed the way they prescribe opioid medication-assisted treatment. The following changes are in place:

- Most service users who already take home their medication will now get a two week supply.
- Many service users who are on supervised consumption will move to unsupervised and will get a two week take home supply. This is with the exception of those who we have assessed that it is not safe to do so (for example, complex mental health issues, sexual exploitation, street homeless, residing in hostels, unable to contact, etc.)
- All new prescription starts (with the exception of pregnant women) will be given Buprenorphine as opposed to Methadone. This is because this medication can be titrated more safely with limited supervision.
- All pregnant women new into treatment will be prescribed Methadone.

Health and care professionals and partner organisations can contact the medicines optimisation team on lutonccg.prescribing@nhs.net if they would like further information and the team will endeavour to respond within 48 hours. Please note that this email address is for professional queries only and is not appropriate for queries from patients and the general public.

Medicines Optimisation Team

NHS Luton Clinical Commissioning Group