

Mid and South Essex (MSE)

Access to oral COVID medication

Standard Operating Procedure

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 Medicines Delivery Unit (CMDU) is a seven-day service that supports non-hospitalised patients who are at a high risk of developing severe complications from COVID-19, despite being vaccinated.

Patients who test positive for COVID-19 can refer themselves to the CMDU for assessment for eligibility for medication by calling 0300 44 35919.

From Monday August 12th, 2024, the way in which the public obtain COVID oral antiviral medication will be changing.

Patients deemed eligible for oral antiviral medication by Mid and South Essex COVID Medicines Delivery Unit (CMDU) will be prescribed by CMDU Clinical Nurse Specialists and dispensed by a community pharmacy.

This will include Paxlovid, Molnupiravir and any new medication to support treatment as determined by CMDU.

Parenteral treatment will continue to be dispensed by the hospital pharmacy.

2. Prescribing

Prescriptions (FP10) will be sent electronically via EPS (electronic prescription service). The prescription will be sent to the spine without a nominated pharmacy.

The patient themselves, or a family member who has proxy access for the patient, will be able to track the prescription and access the bar code on the NHS App.

[View Prescription in the NHS App](#)

3. Stock

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) has signed an agreement with Alliance Healthcare to distribute these products to community pharmacies in England:

- Molnupiravir 200mg capsules (Lagevrio® 200mg capsules)
- Nirmatrelvir 150mg tablets and Ritonavir 100mg tablets (Paxlovid® 150mg/100mg tablets)

The products will be supplied free of charge to contractors, so there is no financial impact if the product is held and then goes out of date. There is also no single order surcharge for these products.

Many community pharmacies are now holding stock of COVID oral antiviral medication or are able to order in Paxlovid or Molnupiravir to meet the timeframe (5 days from positive COVID test) for supply to patient.

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4. Dispensing of Prescriptions

Patients should be advised to try their usual community pharmacy first. Community pharmacists will support access to this medication in a timely manner, contacting their colleagues and using the spine to transfer the prescription as necessary.

On Bank Holidays and at weekends not all community pharmacies are open and opening times may vary. Use [Find a pharmacy](#) to check if a pharmacy is open or to find open pharmacies convenient for the patient/family/carer to collect from.

Patients/family/carer should be advised to telephone their chosen community pharmacy to check availability of the prescribed medication before travelling, particularly if this is a long distance.

5. Collection of Dispensed Medication

Family/friends/carers are responsible for collecting the dispensed medication from the community pharmacy. Whilst some community pharmacies do provide a voluntary delivery service, only distant selling ('internet') pharmacies are required to deliver medications.

A Distance Selling Pharmacy is a pharmacy service where patients don't physically present a prescription. Instead, pharmacy staff receive the prescription by post or electronically, such as via EPS (electronic prescription service).

Distance selling pharmacies located within Essex are shown below- and often have van delivery for local patients. Where delivery is agreed by the community pharmacist, medications should be delivered to the agreed patient location within the agreed timeframe.

Trading Name		NHS Email	Website
Medplus Pharmacy	07393 723031	pharmacy.fjr27@nhs.net	https://medpluspharmacy.co.uk/
SimplyMeds Online	0208 262 3252	nhspharmacy.fx730@nhs.net	https://www.simplymedsonline.co.uk/
Welpharm Pharmacy	01206 863973	pharmacy.fqv90@nhs.net	https://www.welpharm.co.uk/
Greenway Pharmacy	01279 927200	pharmacy.fr251@nhs.net	https://greenwaypharmacy.co.uk/
Total Medicare Limited	020 8502 1480	pharmacy.fge68@nhs.net	http://www.totalmedcare.co.uk/
Allcures Pharmacy	01708 859 750	pharmacy.ff646@nhs.net	https://allcures.com/

Distance Selling Pharmacies					
Trading Name	Address line 1	Address line 2	Town	County	Postcode
Medplus Pharmacy	Unit 5	Upminster TP, Warley Street	Upminster	Essex	RM14 3PJ
SimplyMeds Online	Unit K2	Beckingham Business Park, Tollshunt Major	Maldon	Essex	CM9 8LZ
Welpharm Pharmacy	4 Phoenix Court	Hawkins Road	Colchester	Essex	CO2 8JY
Greenway Pharmacy	73 Sherwood House	Bush Fair	Harlow	Essex	CM18 6NW
Total Medicare Limited	Unit 1, Knight House	Lenthall Road	Loughton	Essex	IG10 3UD
Allcures Pharmacy	Allcures House	Arisdale Avenue	South Ockendon	Essex	RM15 5TT

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6. Difficulties in obtaining medication.

If patients are unable to obtain their oral antiviral medication from a community pharmacy within a 24-hour window of the prescription being issued they should be advised to call the CMDU team on 0300 4435919 between the hours of 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday or 9am to 1pm at the weekend and Bank holidays. If after these times patients should leave a voicemail or email using mse.nmabs@nhs.net and the CMDU team will advise.

In exceptional circumstances where the prescription cannot be dispensed in a community pharmacy due to inability to access the medication within required timeframe, the hospital pharmacy will dispense a prescription. CMDU will cancel the FP10 script on the spine and re-prescribe. The medication will then be supplied to the patient using agreed internal hospital process, with collection/delivery arrangements being made by the hospital.

7. Prescription Queries

In case of any prescription queries from a community pharmacist, the clinical team are available to answer queries 7 days a week between 8am and 6pm. Contact the CMDU team on 0300 4435919 between the hours of 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday or 9am to 1pm at the weekend and Bank holidays. Outside these hours if the query cannot wait until the team is next available leave a message on the voice mail for a response by 6pm. If after 6pm please call Clinical Matron for CMDU - 07956677428.

If the dispensing community pharmacist requires a copy of the completed CMDU triage form which supported the decision to prescribe, and including any advice about changes to existing medication, please email the request to mse.nmabs@nhs.net using an nhs.net email address.

8. Communications

IC24 and other relevant parties will be informed about the change to community pharmacy dispensing of oral antiviral medication for treatment of COVID.

The Mid and south Essex Integrated Care Board and Mid and south Essex Foundation Trust websites will be updated with the following information for patients.

From Monday August 12th, 2024, the way in which the public obtain COVID oral antiviral medication will be changing.

If you are deemed eligible for oral antiviral medication by Mid and South Essex COVID Medicines Delivery Unit (CMDU), the oral medication will be prescribed by CMDU Clinical Nurse Specialists, and the prescription sent electronically to be dispensed by a community pharmacy.

Many community pharmacies in Mid and south Essex are now holding stock of COVID oral antiviral medication or are able to order it in quickly- so try your usual community pharmacy first.

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On Bank Holidays and at weekends not all community pharmacies are open and opening times may vary. Use [Find a pharmacy](#) to check if a pharmacy is open or to find open pharmacies in your area. You are advised to telephone your chosen community pharmacy to check availability of the prescribed medicine before travelling, particularly if this is a long distance. The patient, relative or carer will need to collect the medication from the community pharmacy.

If you are unable to obtain your oral antiviral medication from a community pharmacy within a 24-hour window of the prescription being issued please call the CMDU team on 0300 4435919 Monday to Friday 09:00-16:00, weekends and bank holidays 09:00 - 13:00. If after these times please leave a voicemail or email on mse.nmabs@nhs.net with your full name, date of birth and telephone number and the CMDU team will contact you back the following day.

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