

Dorset Community Pharmacy Oral Contraception Service Guidance

About the service

The Pharmacy Contraceptive Service (PCS) commenced on 24th April 2023, allowing the on-going supply of oral contraception (OC) from community pharmacies under patient group direction (PGD). From 1st December 2023, the service expanded to include both initiation and on-going supply of oral contraception. Then at the end of October 2025, the service was further expanded to include supply of (free) emergency contraception.

In Dorset, as of the end of March 2025, there were around 30,000 patients that would be eligible to receive supplies of either combined hormonal contraception (COC) or progestogen only contraception (POC) via the community pharmacy service.

NHS Dorset, in partnership with Community Pharmacy Dorset, is encouraging practices to refer eligible patients to the Pharmacy Contraception Service (PCS). The NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service (PCS) aims to provide individuals with more convenient options for accessing contraception. Community pharmacists are able to initiate oral contraception and also offer ongoing management and supply of oral contraception that was initiated elsewhere, as well as supply either levonorgestrel or ulipristal as emergency contraception.

Pharmacies offering the contraception service can be located within the [NHS service finder](#).

Eligibility

To be eligible to access this service a person must be seeking to be initiated on an OC, or seeking to obtain a further supply of their ongoing OC, or seeking EHC:

- Combined Oral Contraceptive (COC) - from menarche up to and including 49 years of age
- Progestogen Only Pill (POP) – from menarche up to and including 54 years of age.
- Seeking emergency contraception (and within PGD eligibility criteria)

For more information, please refer to the service specification (available on the [NHS England website](#)).

SystemOne searches

The below SystemOne searches have been published on SystemOne at the following location:

DorsetSystemOne GPs > Medicine Optimisation > Women's Health.

- 01.POP Contraceptive medication (eligible for CP service)
- 01.COC Contraceptive medication (eligible for CP service)

While NHS Dorset has made every effort to exclude dispensing patients and patients who are not eligible for the service, this relies on read coding, and patients' information may have changed since the last update at the practice. These searches are meant to serve as a guide. The data highlights patients who were issued contraceptives in the last 12 months, not all patients will be due for a supply at the same time.

Text messaging

The above searches can be used to send a text message to patients, guiding them to a community pharmacy for their next contraceptive supply.

The text message reads as follows:

‘Local community pharmacies are now offering the NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service, providing individuals with more convenient options for accessing contraception. Community pharmacists can issue oral contraception and continue to manage and supply oral contraception initially prescribed by a general practice, sexual health clinic, or another pharmacy. If you wish to use this service for your next supply of medication, please use this service by following the link: [Find a pharmacy that offers the contraceptive pill without a prescription - NHS](#)’.

The text message can be found in the ‘NHS Do Comms Annexe: Booked appointment’ folder, within the comm annex in SystemOne.



Additional information

- It's important to note that **not all pharmacies** provide the PCS service. Patients use the [NHS service finder](#) to find a participating pharmacy.
- The DiS Pharmacy Contraception Service dashboard includes instructions on how to use the SystemOne searches and track activity related to the Service: [Pharmacy Contraception Service - Power BI](#).
- Verbal consent must be obtained by the Community Pharmacy from the patient to receive the service and to share the consultation outcome with their GP practice. If the patient agrees to share the information and the practice has GP Connect enabled, when the PharmOutcomes message received from the pharmacy is accepted, will be saved to the tabbed journal. If the practice doesn't have GP connect enabled, it will go as a PDF attachment to their SystemOne GP NHS email inbox.
- If the patient does not consent to share information with their GP practice or is not registered with a GP, the consultation can still proceed, and no notification to the practice will be required.
- To ensure your local Community Pharmacies are supported and aware of the communication sent to patients, please inform Fiona Arnold fiona.arnold@nhsdorset.nhs.uk and Community Pharmacy Dorset at sail@dorsetipc.org.uk when the text message has been sent. Thank you.