

Pharmaceutical Service Cover on Public Holidays

1. Background

The publication on an annual basis by NHS Borders of the 8 Public Holidays offers the opportunity to rationally plan pharmaceutical services, knowing when GP practices will be closed and when Borders Urgent Care Centre would be providing cover.

Four public holidays each year are fixed; the remaining four days are determined by NHS Borders based on the pattern below:

The Public Holidays each calendar year would therefore be:-

- Easter Monday
- 1st Monday in May
- July Holiday Monday (July “trades” week)
- Monday of October School week
- Christmas Day *
- Boxing Day *
- 1st January *
- 2nd January *

* or nearest Monday / Tuesday **when these days fall on a weekend.**

NHS Borders will confirm the specific dates on an annual basis before the end of the current year.

By applying a set of rules to these closures both pharmacists and NHS Borders would know what pharmaceutical services would be required well in advance and appropriate arrangements could be made.

2. Current situation

Under current arrangements it is difficult to plan pharmaceutical services since there is no recognised pattern to determine whether pharmacies will be open or closed on public or local holidays. The only consistency is that no pharmacy voluntarily opens on Christmas Day.

Pharmaceutical services are widely available across NHS Borders on Saturdays and in 3 locations on Sundays, namely Boots, Galashiels; Tesco Pharmacy, Galashiels; Borders Pharmacy, Hawick.

Due to the consolidation of out of hours medical care to one location at the Borders General Hospital, Melrose, the geography of the Borders and the strategy to promote appropriate use of pharmacy services there is a need for pharmaceutical services on public and local holidays.

The Borders area has a history of Common Ridings which can result in local holidays specific to a community in the Borders; this can occasionally result in a request to close pharmacies within that community.

In West Linton the GP practice and associated pharmacy are linked with the Lothian Out of Hours service and therefore observe the NHS Lothian public holidays, for this reason the pharmacy in West Linton is excluded for the purposes of determining pharmaceutical care on public holidays through the year however is included for the planning of Christmas and New Year holiday cover.

3. Principles

By agreeing the following set of principles all services involved would be able to make decisions on the required pharmaceutical service in each situation. These 'rules' would be understood in advance and applied on all public and local holidays. There are a variety of permutations possible and the following describe those and the pharmaceutical service required in each situation.

The principles will use the GP Cluster localities as a way of subdividing the area that pharmaceutical care needs to be delivered across NHS Borders. See Appendix 1 for more details.

For the purposes of calculating the rota pattern the following principles will be applied in the order outlined below.

1	Voluntary Opening on a public holiday will not count for the purposes of recording the last rota worked, Only dates where NHS Borders has paid a rota fee will count
2	Any change in contractor code will inherit the pre-existing contractors place in the rota table
3	Any new contractor in an area will go to the top of the list as the next rota to be allocated
4	Where no rota date exists since 01/01/09 then the contractor will be allocated a last rota date of 01/01/09 rota will be allocated based on contractor code (ranked starting from the largest number to the smallest).

Single Public Holiday Only (Mondays)

Cover required on these days would be a pharmacy in each of the East, West and South localities for 2 hours, ideally between the hours of 10-12pm. In the Central cluster, which is in the centre of the Borders and close to the BECS hub, services should be available for 2 hours ideally from 1-3pm to allow services for those patients that are referred into BECS earlier in the day and provide pharmaceutical care across 4 hours.

The rationale behind this is that on most occasions pharmacies situated within the localities are normally open on these days due to the commercial incentive when many of the population are on holiday. The Saturday and Sunday prior to this would be covered by normal contracted hours.

In any instance when this was not the case a rota a rota would be imposed following the pattern detailed in the principles section of this document.

Single Local Holiday (Common Ridings)

Cover required on these days would be a pharmacy within the locality of the community celebrating the Common Riding for 6 hours, ideally between the hours of 10am - 4pm.

The rationale behind this is that, as these days are not Public Holidays there is a contractual requirement for pharmacies to open for their full hours. However it is recognised that Common Riding holiday days are very specific to a community (town/village) and as a result there is normally adequate pharmaceutical care available within the locality. Pharmaceutical care cover is required as not all members of the community may be able to travel to adjacent towns within the locality.

If all pharmacies in a community requested to close then it is the responsibility of the pharmacies in that community to inform NHS Borders which pharmacy will open for the required 6 hours. It will not be a Board responsibility to nominate the contractor. In any instance when this was not the case then the board would not permit any pharmacy closures and would enforce all contractors opening their contracted hours. In the past some of the pharmacies situated within communities have been open on these days due to the commercial incentive when many of the population are not at work.

Friday/Monday Holiday (Excluding Christmas and New Year period)

Cover required on these days would be a pharmacy in the each of the East, West and South localities for 2 hours, ideally between the hours of 10-12pm. In the Central cluster which is in the centre of the Borders and close to the BECS hub services should be available for 2 hours ideally from 1-3pm to allow services for those patients that are referred into BECS earlier in the day and provide pharmaceutical care across 4 hours.

The rationale behind this is that on most occasions pharmacies situated within the localities are normally open on these days due to the commercial incentive when many of the population are on holiday. The Saturday and Sunday prior to/after this would be covered by normal contracted hours.

In any instance when this was not the case a rota would be imposed following the pattern detailed in the principles section of this document.

Christmas/New Year Holiday Period

There are a number of possibilities over this holiday period as 25th, 26th December or 1st, 2nd January may fall on a Saturday or a Sunday; the public holiday may then fall on the Monday or Tuesday. This can lead to the possibility of a 4-day closure of pharmacies as happened in 2017/18. Each of the possibilities would require a different set of rules described below.

Principles used for Christmas/New Year period.

25th Dec is always considered by NHS Borders a non-contractual day and contractors are not expected to open their normal contracted hours.

26th Dec, 1st Jan and 2nd Jan – If these days fall over a weekend then pharmacies are not expected to open their normal contracted hours even though these days are not public holidays as a substitute weekday becomes a bank holiday, normally the following Monday or Tuesday.

Public Holidays fall on consecutive weekdays

Cover required on these days would be a pharmacy in the each of the East, West and South localities for 2 hours, ideally between the hours of 10-12pm. In the Central cluster which is in the centre of the Borders and close to the BECS hub services should be available for 2 hours ideally from 1-3pm to allow services for those patients that are referred into BECS earlier in the day and provide pharmaceutical care across 4 hours.

It is not envisaged that any pharmacy would be open voluntarily on Christmas Day or New Year's Day. A rota would be imposed following the pattern detailed in the principles section of this document.

On Boxing Day and 2nd January volunteers would be sought to open. In the past some of the pharmacies situated within localities have been open on these days due to the commercial incentive when many of the population are on holiday.

In any instance when this was not the case a rota would be imposed following the pattern detailed in the principles section of this document.

Holidays fall on Friday 25th/1st and Saturday 26th/2nd (Designated Public Holidays Friday 25th/1st and Monday 28th/4th)

Cover required on 25th December and 1st January would be a pharmacy in the each of the East, West and South localities for 2 hours, ideally between the hours of 10-12pm. In the Central cluster which is in the centre of the Borders and close to the BECS hub services should be available for 2 hours ideally from 1-3pm to allow services for those patients that are referred into BECS earlier in the day and provide pharmaceutical care across 4 hours.

It is not envisaged that any pharmacy would be open routinely on Christmas Day or New Year's Day and that a rota would be imposed following the pattern detailed in the principles section of this document.

On Saturdays 26th December and 2nd January pharmacies will not be expected to open their normal contracted hours even though neither of these days constitute a public holiday.

On Sundays 27th December and 3rd January normal contracted hours would be in place as neither of these days constitutes a public holiday. The central BECS hub has pharmacies situated in the vicinity covered by these normal contracted hours as well as a pharmacy in Hawick

On 26th, 28th December and 2nd, 4th January cover required would be a pharmacy in the each of the East, West and South localities for 2 hours, ideally between the hours of 10-12pm. In the Central cluster which is in the centre of the Borders and close to the BECS hub services should be available for 2 hours ideally from 1-3pm to allow services for those patients that are referred into BECS earlier in the day and provide pharmaceutical care across 4 hours.

In the past some of the pharmacies situated within localities have been open on these days due to the commercial incentive when many of the population are on holiday. In any instance when this was not the case a rota would imposed following the pattern detailed in the principles section of this document.

Holidays fall on Saturday 25th/1st and Sunday 26th/2nd (Designated Public Holidays Monday 27th/3rd and Tuesday 28th/4th)

Cover required on 25th December Cover required on these days would be a pharmacy in the each of the East, West and South localities for 2 hours, ideally between the hours of 10-12pm. In the Central cluster which is in the centre of the Borders and close to the BECS hub services should be available for 2 hours ideally from 1-3pm to allow services for those patients that are referred into BECS earlier in the day and provide pharmaceutical care across 4 hours.

It is not envisaged that any pharmacy would be open routinely on Christmas Day and that a rota would imposed following the pattern detailed in the principles section of this document.

On Sundays 26th December and 2nd January pharmacies will not be expected to open their normal contracted hours even though neither of these days constitutes a public holiday.

On Mondays 27th December and 3rd January cover required on these days would be a pharmacy in the each of the East, West and South localities for 2 hours, ideally between the hours of 10-12pm. In the Central cluster which is in the centre of the Borders and close to the BECS hub services should be available for 2 hours ideally from 1-3pm to allow services for those patients that are referred into BECS earlier in the day and provide pharmaceutical care across 4 hours.

Volunteers would be sought to open. In the past some of the pharmacies situated within localities have been open on these days due to the commercial incentive when many of the population are on holiday. In any instance where this was not the case a rota would be imposed following the pattern detailed in the principles section of this document.

On Tuesdays 28th December and 4th January the 'rule' for 27th December and 3rd January would be repeated. In the past some of the pharmacies situated within localities have been open on these days due to the commercial incentive when many of the population are on holiday. In any instance when this was not the case a rota would be imposed following the pattern detailed in the principles section of this document.

On Saturday 1st January normal contracted hours would be in place as this would not be designated a public holiday. All pharmacies would therefore be expected to open their contracted hours.

Holidays fall on Sunday 25th/1st and Monday 26th/2nd (Designated Public Holidays Monday 26th/2nd and Tuesday 27th/3rd)

Cover required on Sundays 25th December cover required on these days would be a pharmacy in the each of the East, West and South localities for 2 hours, ideally between the hours of 10-12pm. In the Central cluster which is in the centre of the Borders and close to the BECS hub services should be available for 2 hours ideally from 1-3pm to allow services for those patients that are referred into BECS earlier in the day and provide pharmaceutical care across 4 hours.

It is not envisaged that any pharmacy would be open routinely on Christmas Day and that a rota would be imposed following the pattern detailed in the principles section of this document.

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On Sunday 1st January normal contracted hours would be in place as this would not be designated a public holiday. All pharmacies would therefore be expected to open their contracted hours.

4. Resource implications

There are currently locally negotiated rates agreed for rotas that are imposed to provide pharmaceutical services. These rates would be adhered to and no further or enhanced payments would be made. In the past years no pharmacy has opened on Christmas Day however to alleviate pressure on BECS there may be a need to impose rota services which will have financial implications.

5. Conclusion

It is hoped by clarifying the requirements on any given public holiday that pharmaceutical services can be planned in advance. This in turn allows rotas to be put in place in enough time to allow staff to be organised if required.

It is recognised that some GP practices may not close on public holidays. If this decision is made it will not affect the ability of the pharmacy to close, so early notification of opening of a GP practice to the local community pharmacy is required to allow the pharmacy to make the decision to open or not.

It is also recognised that the co-operation of all pharmacies is required to make this work as designed. In January each year pharmacists will be required to indicate if they will be opened on the designated public and local holidays for the following 12 months. As soon as the results of this are known a consultation will take place between the Lead Pharmacist for Community Pharmacy and the OOH Clinical lead to determine the cover required. Following this, pharmacies will be informed of the required pharmaceutical cover for the 12-month period up to 31st Jan the following year.

Appendix 1 – Pharmacies in GP Clusters

East	Central	South	West
GLM Romanes, Chirside	Earlston Pharmacy, Earlston	Boots Pharmacy, Hawick	Innerleithen Pharmacy, Innerleithen
GLM Romanes, Coldstream	Boots Pharmacy, Galashiels	Borders Pharmacy, Hawick	Boots Pharmacy, Peebles
GLM Romanes, Duns	Borders Pharmacy, Galashiels	Lindsay & Gilmour, Hawick	Farren Pharmacy, Galashiels
GLM Romanes, Eyemouth	Tesco Pharmacy, Galashiels	TN Crosby, Hawick	Lloyds Pharmacy, Galashiels
GLM Romanes, Greenlaw	Lauder Pharmacy, Lauder	Lindsay and Gilmour, Selkirk	Lloyds Pharmacy, Peebles
Boots Pharmacy, Jedburgh	Boots Pharmacy, Melrose	Right Medicine Pharmacy, Selkirk	West Linton Pharmacy, West Linton (included for Christmas/New Year holidays)
Jedburgh Pharmacy, Jedburgh	Eildon Pharmacy, Newtown St Boswells	Hawick Health Centre Pharmacy, Hawick (Excluded for the purposes of this document)	
Boots Pharmacy, Kelso			
Lloyds Pharmacy, Kelso			
9 Pharmacies	7 Pharmacies	7 Pharmacies	6 Pharmacies

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Approved NHS Borders Area Pharmaceutical Committee July 2022

Location: \Pharmacy\Community Pharmacy\Christmas, New Year, Pub Hol Activity and Claims\Public Holiday Service Cover