

**Letter from RPS President Sandra Gidley and RPS England Chair Prof Claire Anderson to Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health Jo Churchill MP**

2 June 2020

**Pharmacy access to PPE portal**

“As we begin to look at how the health service will need to adapt in future, it is vital that all pharmacy teams are included in support for the workforce to deliver frontline care safely. With this in mind, we had sought assurances from you, including in our letter of 23 April, that community pharmacy would be able to access the new PPE portal. We were given the strong impression that, once the robustness of the system had been tested then pharmacy would be included.

“The [announcement](#) on 26 May mentioned GP practices and small care homes “during this phase of the roll-out”, but did not include pharmacy or wider primary care. We would welcome confirmation that pharmacists and all health professionals in primary care will have equal access to the PPE portal. Can you confirm the date that pharmacists will be able to access the scheme?”

**Test and Trace**

“We are awaiting further details on the announced Test and Trace programme, in particular whether there is guidance on the implications for the health and care workforce. For example, would staff in a pharmacy or GP surgery, often working in close proximity, all have to self-isolate for 14 days if a patient or member of the team was tested with COVID-19? Given the potential significant impact on patients if a pharmacy has to close for two weeks with short notice, we are seeking an urgent clarification.”

**Antibody testing**

“While it has been reported that community pharmacy teams will be able to access the antibody testing programme, a [letter](#) from the NHS on 25 May notes that ‘each NHS region is coordinating its own specific arrangements to roll out antibody testing to NHS staff’. It adds that further scientific guidance and decisions from DHSC are awaited as to whether staff will be tested once or repeatedly. We would welcome further detail on this phased approach, confirmation that all staff in pharmacy teams who want an antibody test will be offered one, and assurance that you would seek this to be made available to all health and care staff as quickly as possible.”