



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

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Mr Mark Koziol
Chairman
Pharmacists' Defence Association
The Old Fire Station
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11 May 2020

Dear Mark,

NHS LIFE ASSURANCE SCHEME

Thank you for your open letter of 28 April about the new NHS Life Assurance scheme.

Firstly, I should like to express my sincere condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of the three members you mention, who have died as a result of COVID-19. I am immensely grateful to all community pharmacy teams who are helping the national effort at this unprecedented time and fully appreciate the challenges which many individuals, families and businesses are facing.

As you are aware, I announced a new Life Assurance scheme on 27 April. I can confirm that this scheme is for frontline NHS and social care workers who die from coronavirus in the course of their duties, and had been working in frontline roles and locations where personal care is provided to individuals who have contracted the coronavirus.

The scheme is non-contributory and pays a £60,000 lump sum. It recognises that frontline health and social care staff are working in environments where direct personal healthcare is provided to patients and service users who have or are suspected to have coronavirus.

The scheme applies an occupational and situational test to establish eligibility, and the basic approach is that:

- The individual was employed in a role covered by the scheme
- It can be established that in the 14 days before symptoms emerged, the individual had been working in environments or locations where personal care is provided to patients or service users who have, or were suspected to have, contracted coronavirus
- The nature of the work they did led to an increased risk of contracting coronavirus
- Coronavirus was the cause of or a contributory factor in the death.

I absolutely recognise the vital contribution of community pharmacy staff as a frontline service and the increased risks that community pharmacy staff may face where they are providing close personal healthcare. Because of the different nature of employment in community pharmacy, we have designed the scheme by way of my having discretion to make awards to those in pharmacy who meet the conditions of the scheme.

I can confirm that I intend to exercise that discretion in respect of those members of the pharmacy workforce who worked in, or were in training to become:

- Registered pharmacists
- Registered pharmacy technicians
- Dispensing assistants
- Medicine counter assistants

It will be for employers and the individual's beneficiaries for pharmacy staff as for other eligible staff groups to take forward claims and provide evidence showing that the case fits the wider eligibility criteria. Claims will be verified and processed by the NHS Business Services Authority, who will work with employers to ensure claims are handled swiftly and sensitively. Cases from community pharmacy will be treated in the same way as cases from other parts of the NHS and social care sectors.

I hope this letter addresses your concerns regarding the Life Assurance scheme and confirms our recognition of community pharmacy as a vital frontline service.

Yours ever,



MATT HANCOCK