



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

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

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Liz Fidler  
President  
Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK  
One Victoria Square  
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11 May 2020

Dear Liz,

### **NHS LIFE ASSURANCE SCHEME**

I am writing to you to confirm the arrangements of the new NHS Life Assurance scheme which I announced on 27 April.

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.

In writing, I also want to pay tribute to the important role of pharmacy technicians, within pharmacy teams, not least in community pharmacy. I realise when people talk about pharmacy, they will often refer to pharmacists. Pharmacy technicians, as a regulated health profession in their own right, also deserve our recognition and thanks for their valuable contribution on the front-line of the NHS, caring directly for patients and the public.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

**MATT HANCOCK**