

Frequently Asked Questions – support for Care Homes during Covid -19 Pandemic

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1) Where can we obtain medicines for EoLC from?

- Prescribers are advised to direct EoLC prescriptions to their patient's own regular pharmacy in the first instance
- Where a more urgent need and/or delay may occur prescribers can refer to an appropriate EoLC commissioned pharmacy during in hours provision. These pharmacies have been commissioned by the CCG to order and stock an agreed list of EoLC medicines
- Where EoLC medicines need to be accessed out of hours, contact your out of hours services, who can contact these commissioned pharmacy providers

2) Medication is missing from our monthly order. What can I do?

- Contact your community pharmacy to find out why the medicines are missing
- Find out from your community pharmacy if the item is out of stock and if an alternative can be supplied
- It could be that the item has been missed by the GP. In which case, contact the GP and ask for it to be prescribed and sent to the community pharmacy
- If a patient is likely to miss a dose, and a supply is needed urgently out of hours, contact 111 for advice. An out of hours GP can then arrange for a prescription if needed

3) Are community providers of INR services still providing services throughout the Covid-19 pandemic?

- INR services provided by community providers will continue to operate during the Covid-19 pandemic. If you have any residents that are unable to have their INR tested, please inform their GP

4) Can we re-use medicines during the Covid-19 pandemic in care homes?

- Guidance on running a medicines re-use scheme in a care home or hospice setting was published by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England and NHS Improvement on 28th April 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reuse-of-medicines-in-a-care-home-or-hospice>). This document will be updated, and so ensure you always use the most up to date version.
- The Guidance/ Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines steps that must be taken to ensure the scheme is carried out safely, in the best interest of residents/patients and to ensure there is a clear documentation process

5) When is a medicine suitable for re-use under the re-use scheme?

- Medicines can be re-used when:
 - there is no available stock of a medicine in an appropriate time frame (as informed by the supplying pharmacy) and there is an immediate patient need for the medicine
 - no suitable alternative is available in a timely manner
 - the benefits of using a medicine under the re-use scheme outweighs any risk to a patient receiving that medicine
- A valid prescription must be in the possession of the care home or hospice to support the re-use of medicines before it can be administered.
- The re-use scheme applies to medicines that are no longer needed by the person for whom they were originally prescribed for. Medicines cannot be 'borrowed or shared'
- Before a medicine can be re-used, it must be risk assessed and authorised as suitable for re-use by a registered health care professional, using criteria listed in the SOP
- If a medicine is thought to be suitable for re-use, permission should, if possible, be obtained for reuse from the patient for whom it was prescribed or (if the patient lacks capacity) from a person with power of attorney, or (if the patient has died) from their next of kin. Consent should also include permission for the resident to receive a medicine authorised for re-use (should this situation arise).

6) If I have a medicine authorised as suitable for re-use, can I send it to another care home if they have a need for it?

- Re-use should only be within a single care home/hospice setting; medicines identified for re-use should not be transferred to another care home or hospice, even those within the same parent organisation.

7) Where can I get further information about the medicines re-use scheme?

- Care Homes considering the re-use scheme, must familiarise themselves with the SOP produced by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England and NHS Improvement (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reuse-of-medicines-in-a-care-home-or-hospice>). This document will be updated, and so ensure you always use the most up to date version.
- For further information, you can contact your community pharmacist, care home pharmacist, or the Medicines Optimisation Team at your local CCG (please see question below for details). Further guidance is currently being produced across North East London to further support the implementation of the medicines re-use scheme.

8) Where can I get answers to medicines related questions?

- You can contact your community pharmacist, GP, or email the Medicines Optimisation Team of your local CCG as follows:
 - Tower Hamlets - thccg.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net
 - Waltham Forest and Newham WFCCG.MedicinesOptimisation@nhs.net
 - City and Hackney - cahccg.cityandhackneymedicines@nhs.net
 - Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge – bhrmedicines.management@nhs.net