In May 2014 the MHRA undertook a UK wide consultation (http://rphar.ms/1C3xobf) to allow schools to obtain and hold their own stocks of salbutamol inhalers for use in emergencies. Following overwhelming positive response to the consultation, amending legislation (The Human Medicines (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2014) (http://rphar.ms/1ux82xH) was laid before Parliament on the 18th July 2014 and is coming into effect on 1 October 2014. This will enable schools to hold stocks of salbutamol inhalers. They can then be supplied in an emergency by persons trained to administer them to pupils who are known to require such medication in schools. This resource aims to support pharmacists receiving requests from schools for salbutamol inhalers following the legislative changes coming into effect.

**Frequently asked questions**

**Who can provide a signed order for salbutamol inhalers for a school?**

A written order signed by the principal or head teacher at the school must be provided to enable a supply to be made to the school.

**What information should be contained in the signed order?**

In line with legislation requirements;

“The order must be signed by the principal or head teacher at the school concerned and state:

(i) the name of the school for which the medicinal product is required,

(ii) the purpose for which that product is required, and

(iii) the total quantity required”

Ideally appropriately headed paper should be used however this is not a legislative requirement.

**How many inhalers can a school obtain?**

The number of inhalers that can be obtained by individual schools is not specified in legislation. As part of the consultation process (http://rphar.ms/lqmbB63) it was acknowledged that the number held for emergency use would be dependent on a variety of factors including: the school size and the number of sites it is comprised of; the number of children known to have asthma, and past experiences of children who had not been able to access their inhaler. It was however agreed, generally that only a small number of inhalers were likely to be needed annually. Schools can purchase salbutamol inhalers from pharmacies provided it is for small quantities, on an occasional basis and not for profit thus in line with MHRA Guidance for pharmacists on the repeal of Section 10(7) of the Medicines Act 1968 (http://rphar.ms/IucU3R7).

**What records do I need to keep in the pharmacy?**

The signed order needs to be retained for 2 years from the date of supply or an entry made into the Prescription-only-medicine (POM) register. Even where the signed order is retained it is good practice to make a record in the POM register for audit purposes. In line with normal record keeping requirement an entry in the POM register must include:

- Date the POM was supplied
- Name, quantity and where it is not apparent formulation and strength of POM supplied
- Name and address, trade, business or profession of the person to whom the medicine was supplied
- The purpose for which it was sold or supplied.

**What other information could I be asked to provide?**

The pharmacist could be also be asked to

- Explain how to use a salbutamol inhaler and any associated information
- Advise schools on the selection of the most appropriate spacer device for the different age groups and how to use them correctly.

**What guidance is available for schools on the new changes?**

The Department of Health has issued guidance (http://rphar.ms/Z8E6Pm) outlining the principles of safe use of inhalers to capture the good practice which schools in England should observe. The guidance covers issues such as arrangements for storage, care and disposal of medication within the school environment. Although this guidance is mainly specific for England the principles of safe usage are however universal. Schools in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland should be advised to contact their own regulators for further guidance on this where required. Estyn (www.estyn.gov.

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1 The Human Medicines (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2014
uk) is responsible for inspection of schools in Wales and Education Scotland (http://rphar.ms/1qZoyc6) is responsible for inspections in Scotland.

Where can I locate information on a school including head teacher/principal details if required?

There is no centralised database containing details of schools and head teachers across GB. Possible sources of information would include:

- Department for Education’s register of educational establishments in England and Wales  
  http://rphar.ms/1C3tVtd  
- Local authorities’ directory of schools  
  http://rphar.ms/1rg5gp  
- Ofsted reports  
  http://rphar.ms/1r9qYiY  
- Information on the individual school’s website

Where to go for more information

Asthma UK  
www.asthma.org.uk  

NHS choices asthma in children  
http://rphar.ms/1pobG90  

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions. Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England (Department for Education, 2014)  
http://rphar.ms/Z8C0yZ  

http://rphar.ms/1rfhOV1  

The Administration of Medicines in Schools (Scottish Executive, 2001)  
http://rphar.ms/1uwaX9X  

RPS support resources

- MEP  
  www.rpharms.com/mep  
- Counselling Patients on Medicines quick reference guide  
  http://rphar.ms/1p9ZdGS  
- Supporting patients with Asthma quick reference guide  
  http://rphar.ms/1udfYrz  

RPS Support  
Online: www.rpharms.com/enquiry  
Phone: 0845 257 2570  
Email: support@rpharms.com

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