

Guidance on the Issue of 7 Day Prescriptions

Seven day prescriptions should be issued when 7 day dispensing is required.

For example when:

1. **There is a clear clinical need for restricting the quantity of medication that a patient holds at any one time** e.g. concerns about overdose or misuse.
2. **There are frequent changes to the medication regime** - using 7 day quantities will help to minimise waste as a result of medication changes. Once stability in dose/medication choice is achieved, consider moving to 28 day quantities.
3. **When a Monitored Dosage System (MDS) device is required to be supplied on a weekly basis** to support the medication compliance of a particular patient.

The Repeat Dispensing Scheme can be used to reduce workload when generating weekly scripts for medication that is unlikely to change in dosage during the repeat dispensing period. Electronic prescribing will also make the issuing of weekly prescriptions easier.

The Supply of Monitored Dosage Systems (MDS) / Multi-compartment Compliance Aids (MCA)

- There are a wide variety of MDS/MCAs available beyond the familiar dosett box version.
- Dispensing pharmacists obligations to provide medication in MDS does **not** necessitate 7 day prescribing **UNLESS** the MDS needs to be supplied to the patient on a weekly basis eg. for patients in the above groups 1,2,3.
- Pharmacists are required to assess patients who may fall under the Equality Act (EA) 2010 (formerly the Disability Discrimination Act - DDA) and provide 'reasonable adjustments' to how they provide medications. Pharmacists should consider the advice of other healthcare professionals in their determination of the EA eligibility of a patient.
- Where a patient is considered eligible by the pharmacist for a medication compliance aid, a small amount of funding is already globally incorporated in the national pharmacy contract.
- An EA 'reasonable adjustment' provided by a pharmacist may include providing easy opening tops, reminder charts or an MDS device appropriate for the patient.

Ambiguity arises if patients do **not** fall under the EA eligibility criteria, but request an MDS to aid compliance, either for themselves, or for carers to help them take their medications. National funding has not been incorporated in the pharmacy contract to include these patients. In this situation:

- Patients falling under this category should be identified to the GP indicating the reasons for 7 day prescriptions. It would be good practice to record the reasons suggested and the GP decision on 7 day prescribing in the patient's notes for future reference.

- Provision of 7 day prescriptions for such patients is at the discretion of the prescriber.
- Prescribers should consider the fact that poor medication concordance can have wider treatment implications, including in some cases greater hospital admissions. However, simply providing medication in 7 day compliance aids will not improve concordance for all patients and for some patients may not be appropriate.
- Where 7 day prescriptions are agreed, Pharmacists should fill and dispense the MDS weekly, to minimise waste to the NHS if changes occur mid-week, (or be willing to accept the loss if changes occur). GPs are not expected to replace prescriptions for greater than the week being changed and those weeks not yet dispensed.
- Completion of 28 days worth of the MDS devices should only occur on receipt of a 28 day prescription.
- Where 7 day scripts are **not** agreed as **necessary** for patient concordance, it becomes a financial decision within the pharmacy whether to continue providing MDS for free, or to charge the patient for this non NHS contracted service.

Additional Notes

Pharmacists should:

- Inform prescribers of medication that should not be dispensed in a compliance aid.
- Make prescribers aware of medication prescribed on a 7 day prescription for which 'special container' rules apply.

References:

Information on the stability of individual medicines in medication compliance aids available at:

<http://www.ukmi.nhs.uk/applications/mca/>

UKMI Medicines in Compliance Aids database

Information on 'special containers' available at:

<http://psnc.org.uk/dispensing-supply/dispensing-a-prescription/special-containers/>

Guidance is available to help pharmacists undertake Equality Act (DDA) assessments of patients at:

<http://www.pcc-cic.org.uk/article/disability-discrimination-act-resource-kit>

The Primary Care Commissioning Disability Discrimination Act resource kit.

Guidance to help decide whether a multi-compartment compliance aid is appropriate for a patient at:

<http://www.rpharms.com/unsecure-support-resources/improving-patient-outcomes-through-the-better-use-of-mcas.asp> Improving patient outcomes: The better use of multi-compartment compliance aids (Royal Pharmaceutical Society July 2013)

PSNC guidance on 7 day prescriptions is available at:

<http://psnc.org.uk/contract-it/pharmacy-regulation/dda/the-equality-act-2010-28-day-prescribing/#>