

Guidance on Bulk Prescribing for Care Home Patients

What is bulk prescribing?

A bulk prescription is an order for **two or more patients** bearing the name of an institution in which at least **20 persons normally reside**, **10 or more of whom are registered with a particular GP practice**.

Why was this guidance produced?

It was recognised that bulk prescribing could provide the following benefits:

- Potential to reduce waste saving money for the NHS
- Reduction of space required in the drug trolley
- Reduces drug round time / dispensing time
- Reduces potential for administration error

What is this guidance about?

It provides advice on the system for care home staff, prescribers and community pharmacy on a limited selection of commonly prescribed medication in care homes.

What medications can be bulk prescribed?

The medication must be prescribed on the NHS and be either:

- 'P' pharmacy medicine – can be bought in a pharmacy or
- 'GSL' product – 'general sales list' product that can be bought in a supermarket.

'POM' – 'Prescription Only Medicines' **cannot** be issued by bulk prescription e.g. antibiotics, blood pressure medication

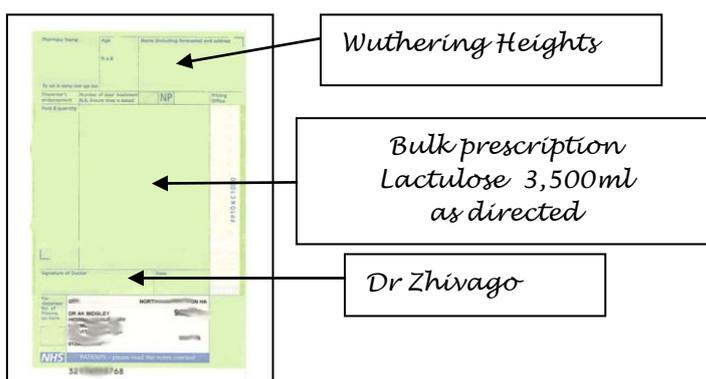
The following medicines are considered suitable for bulk prescribing:

Lactulose syrup	Adcal D3 tablets	Senna tablets
Movicol/Laxido/generic macrogol sachets		Paracetamol tablets**

** up to 96 tablets only (quantity greater than this is a POM). Service users taking regular paracetamol are therefore not suitable for bulk prescription. See separate section for dressings (page 4)

What is on the bulk prescription?

A bulk prescription can be written or printed on an ordinary FP10 prescription.



It has to include:

- the name of the care home (instead of the individual name of the service user)
- the date
- the words 'bulk prescription' – to identify the type of prescription
- the medicine that is being bulk prescribed
- the total quantity required for all service users on this medication

The directions may state 'as directed' due to variation in doses for each service user. The MAR chart will provide the dose to be administered for each service user.

Bulk Prescribing Support for the Care Home Staff

Starting bulk prescribing

- Observe list of medicines suitable for bulk prescription
- Decide if service users fit the criteria for bulk prescribing – see p1
- Care home manager and prescriber discuss and agree on medicines that can be bulk prescribed in their care home and inform community pharmacy.
- The care home manager must ensure that staff responsible for ordering and administering medication understands the principles of bulk prescribing.
- It is **not** appropriate for service users who self medicate to be included in bulk prescribing. In this situation, medicines are stored within a locked facility in the service user's own room. These must not be shared.
- The Royal Pharmaceutical Society for Great Britain recommends bulk prescribing is not a way of obtaining stock items of homely remedies
- **On commencing treatment, the medication must be prescribed initially on a prescription bearing the service user's name. This will ensure the medicine and specific directions appear on that service user's subsequent MAR charts. This will also evidence that the service user has been prescribed this medication.** NB It is at the pharmacist's discretion whether a MAR chart is supplied as they are not contractually obliged to provide MAR charts.
- **Subsequent prescriptions for each new service user can then be ordered using a bulk prescription.**
- **The bulk prescription may state 'as directed'.**
- Prior to requesting a bulk prescription check current stock. By observing the dose prescribed and administered on the MAR, calculate the amount required for each service user. Total the amount required and record as example shown below.

Service user name	Dose	Total quantity prescribed for month
Service user a	10ml bd	560
Service user b	15ml bd	840
Service user c	10ml od	280
Service user d	10ml bd	560
Service user e	10ml bd	560
	Total	2800
	Current stock level	1700ml
	Estimated amount remaining by the end of this cycle	300ml
	Total to be ordered	2500ml
Service users whose dose has changed or stopped	Service users name Mrs A. Smith	<i>delete as appropriate</i> ██████ / stopped
	Mr B. Jones	date 01/01/2013
		dose change/ ██████ 01/01/2013

- It is suggested that a monthly order form for the bulk prescription is sent to the practice *see sample above and appendix 1*.

This should include:

- the medication required for bulk prescription
- the names of the service users to be included
- the dose/ quantity they are currently taking
- estimated current stock level
- estimated amount remaining by the end of the month
- the overall total quantity required on the bulk prescription

It would be good practice to save a copy of this monthly order for your records.

- As with all prescriptions, the bulk prescription generated by the practice should be checked at the care home **prior** to it going to the community pharmacy - report any discrepancy to the prescriber
- A copy of the monthly order form to be sent to community pharmacy with prescriptions
- When ordering from the MAR chart there needs to be some indication to inform the community pharmacy that **the medicine is still to be continued but not to be supplied for the individual – you should indicate ‘bulk prescribing’ on the MAR chart where you would normally state quantity needed.**
- If the MAR chart is not used for ordering, for example, right hand side of prescription used, the monthly order form will inform the community pharmacy of the service users receiving medication by bulk prescription.

Receiving the medication from community pharmacy

- Check that the quantity received was the quantity ordered NB: the label on the medicine will identify the care home not the individual service user e.g. ‘*Wuthering Heights*’
- Check that the MAR charts have the medicine and the correct current dose of the bulk prescribed medicine for each service user. Report any discrepancy to the community pharmacy

Storage

- Store the bulk medicine in a lockable storage facility.

Administration

- Observe the service user’s MAR chart and the dose prescribed.
- Bulk medicine should only be used when stated on MAR chart
- Select the bulk prescribed medicine –NB this will be labelled with the care home not the individual service user.
- To avoid unnecessary medication waste, ensure service users’ initial supplies of this medicine (labelled with their own names) are used first before administering from bulk stock. Medication labelled with an individual’s name must only be administered to that service user.
- Follow the normal care home administration procedure.

Monthly re-ordering

Each month, the staff member responsible for the ordering must check quantities being administered, estimate amount remaining by the end of the month and adjust the total quantity to be ordered, if necessary, to prevent excess stock accumulating or being discarded.

Take into account:

- the variable dose prescribed, if applicable
- the quantity being administered to the service users
- the quantity currently in stock
- any service user who has stopped this medication. Where the medicine has been stopped by the prescriber, ensure the service user's MAR is endorsed appropriately and inform the community pharmacist that this person has stopped using the bulk prescription order form. This will ensure the medicine does not appear on the new MAR.

NB there must be at least 2 services users who are still prescribed the particular bulk medicine when it is re-ordered.

- A new prescription must be requested for the individual service user if there is any change to the dose of the bulk prescribed medication. Subsequent prescriptions can be requested on bulk prescription.

Medication Waste Management

To avoid unnecessary medication waste, ensure service users' initial supplies labelled with their own names are used first before administering from bulk stock. Medication labelled with an individual's name must only be administered to that service user.

Regular audit of medication returns book will highlight any avoidable bulk medication returns.

Dressings on Bulk Prescription

As there is no specific guidance available on supplying non-medicated dressings on a bulk prescription this guidance suggests the following 2 options:

Option 1 – supply through the homely remedy process. If there is a need to ensure non medicated dressings are available when required they could be purchased by the care home and managed through the homely remedy process (see separate guidance).

Option 2 – supply by bulk prescription. Non medicated dressings, if they can be purchased over the counter, can be issued on a bulk prescription if the criteria are met (see page 1).

The requirement for the dressing may not be immediate and therefore it is suggested that an initial prescription for the individual is not written. There should be clear documentation in the care plan of its future use. The prescriber should write a patient specific direction to authorise administration of the dressing for certain conditions. Where there has been no initial prescription for the individual, when there is a need for the dressing to be applied, all the appropriate information needs to be transcribed onto the service users MAR chart following the care home procedure. Please refer to transcribing guidance for further information

Bulk Prescribing Support for Prescriber/ Practice

- Observe list of medicines suitable for bulk prescription.
- Decide if service users fit the criteria for bulk prescribing – see page1.
- Prescriber and care home manager discuss and agree on medicines that can be bulk prescribed in the care home and inform community pharmacy.
- Agree a system with the care home regarding requests for bulk prescriptions.
- **On commencing treatment, the medication must be prescribed initially on a prescription bearing the service user's name. This will ensure the medicine and specific directions appear on that service user's subsequent MAR charts.** An entry must be made on the repeat screen to ensure there is a record of bulk prescribing.
- Access the service users computer records and on the selected medication include '*bulk prescription*' to the instruction to identify it is supplied as part of bulk prescription (e.g. Lactulose 10ml twice daily - bulk prescription).
- Bulk prescriptions can either be handwritten or computer generated. The care home name is a requirement on the prescription. To allow computer generated bulk prescriptions to be issued, it is suggested that the practice 'registers' the 'care home name' as an inactive patient. Using this record to issue all bulk prescriptions for that care home ensures a chronological record of items issued for audit purposes.
- If the above process is not used, and bulk prescriptions are handwritten there must be an alternative method of recording. **A record of the bulk prescription must be logged at the practice either via**
 - **entry on the care home's 'inactive patient' record**
 - **entering details onto each service users computer record**
- **Ensure the order form is retained by the practice for audit purposes e.g. practice may choose to scan this order into the care home record.**
- **A new prescription must be generated for the individual service user if there is any change to the dose of the bulk prescribed medication. Subsequent prescriptions can be requested on bulk prescription.**
- Ensure reception staff are aware of the bulk prescribing process.
- Amend repeat prescribing protocol to include bulk prescribing (see appendix 2).

Bulk Prescribing Support for Community Pharmacy

- Ensure dispensary staff are aware of principles of bulk prescribing.
- Agree a system with the care home regarding requests for bulk prescriptions.
- **On commencing treatment, the medication must be prescribed initially on a prescription bearing the service user's name. This will ensure the medicine and specific directions appear on that service user's subsequent MAR charts - NB It is at the pharmacist's discretion whether a MAR chart is supplied as this is not a contractual requirement.**
- **Subsequent prescriptions for each new service user can then be ordered using a bulk prescription.**
- Observe list of medicines suitable for bulk prescription.
- Check the bulk prescription writing standards , please see page 1 and 2
- Observe bulk prescription monthly order form from care home
 - Check agreed medication list for bulk prescribing
 - Check quantity requested matches bulk prescription
 - Check that the service users listed on the bulk prescribing monthly order form have a record of the bulk prescribed medication on the MAR chart
 - Confirm any discrepancies with care home/ prescriber

- While service user requires medication on bulk prescription, if supplying MAR chart, print the medication and direction to allow endorsement of administration to be made
- Indicate medication is bulk prescribed on MAR chart
- Bulk prescriptions are submitted to the Business Services Authority as normal
- There is no prescription charge for a bulk prescription.

Resources

- Isle of Wight Bulk Prescribing Procedure October 2009
- Royal Pharmaceutical Society The Administration and Control of Medicines in Care Homes and Children's Services 2003
- NHS Drug Tariff (current edition)
- MHRA Frequently asked questions: Patient Specific Directions April 2013
<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Howweregulate/Medicines/Availabilityprescribingandsupplyingofmedicines/Frequentlyraisedissues/PatientSpecificDirections/index.htm>
- **Appendices**
 - Appendix 1 Sample recording form for care home use (p7)
 - Appendix 2 Sample for GP Practice Repeat Prescribing Protocol - Bulk Prescribing (p8)
- **Quick Guide to Bulk Prescribing (p9)**

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Appendix 2 Sample for GP Practice Repeat Prescribing Protocol - Bulk Prescribing

Bulk Prescribing

A bulk prescription is an order for **two or more patients** bearing the name of an institution in which at least **20 persons normally reside, 10 or more of whom are registered with a particular GP practice.**

What medications can be bulk prescribed?

The medication must be prescribed on the NHS and be either:

- 'P' pharmacy medicine – can be bought in a pharmacy or
- 'GSL' product – 'general sales list' product that can be bought in a supermarket.

'POM' – 'Prescription Only Medicines' **cannot** be issued by bulk prescription e.g. antibiotics, blood pressure medication

The following medicines are considered suitable for bulk prescribing

Paracetamol tablets**	Lactulose	Senna tablets	Adcal D3	Movicol/Laxido/generic macrogol sachets
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** up to 96 tablets only per bulk prescription (quantity greater than this is a POM)

- Practice staff will receive requests from the care home which may include bulk prescribing requests.
- Practice staff dealing with any part of the bulk prescribing process will be trained accordingly and understand the process.
- Trained staff receive list of service users requiring medicine on bulk prescription from the care home.
- Check the request fits the criteria for bulk prescribing (see above definition)
- Check an initial prescription has been generated and issued for each service user for the medicine prior to the bulk prescription request .To ensure there is a record of bulk prescribing on the service user's repeat screen , add 'bulk prescription' to directions e.g. *Lactulose 10ml twice daily - bulk prescription.*
- Observe the care home bulk prescribing order form and ensure the required amount requested is appropriate – the amount requested may differ each month due to stock control. Refer to prescriber if unsure.
- Generate a prescription for the required amount. A bulk prescription can be handwritten or printed on an ordinary FP10 prescription.

It has to include:

- the name of the care home (instead of the individual name of the service user)
- the date
- the words 'bulk prescription' – to identify the type of prescription
- the medicine that is being bulk prescribed
- the total quantity required for all service users on this medication

The directions may state 'as directed 'due to variation in doses for each service user.

- Document evidence of order received from care home and prescription generated e.g. scan into care home record
- Service users to be reviewed at appropriate intervals to ensure prescription is still required.

Quick Guide to Bulk Prescribing

Care Home

Care home/ prescriber discuss process and agree medicines from list to be bulked prescribed

Check request fits criteria for bulk prescribing

For each new service user, the medication must be prescribed initially on a prescription bearing the service user's name.

Before re-ordering - check quantity already in the care home and amount required for each service user
Adjust total quantity to prevent excess stock accumulating or being discarded.
Completed bulk prescribing order form to be sent to practice – calculate quantity required, keep copy of order form

Check prescription prior to sending to community pharmacy – send copy of order to community pharmacy with prescription – communicate when stopped or dose changed

Check MAR charts and medication received
NB - medication is labelled with name of organisation not the individual service user

Administer medication to service user as prescribed

Regular audit of medication returns book will highlight any avoidable bulk medication returns

Prescriber /Practice

Care home/ prescriber discuss process and agree medicines from list to be bulked prescribed

Receive request for bulk prescription from care home via bulk prescribing order form
Check request fits criteria for bulk prescribing

Ensure initial prescription has previously been requested for service user.
To indicate medication requested is now via bulk prescription add '*bulk prescription*' to medication instruction on service users repeat medication screen

Generate bulk prescription for the care home electronically or handwritten as stated in practice protocol

Ensure the order form is retained by the practice for audit purposes e.g. practice may choose to scan this into the care home record

Community Pharmacy

Observe list agreed to be bulk prescribed

Receive bulk prescribing order form from care home and prescription
Check criteria for bulk prescribing
Check quantity requested matches bulk prescription
Check that the service users listed on the bulk prescribing order form have a record on the computerised MAR chart of the bulk prescribed medication

If providing MAR chart ensure specific instruction for this medication is on the MAR chart

If providing MAR Indicate 'bulk prescription item' to MAR

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