



To:
All GP practices

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Dear Colleague

Communication of Instalment Dispensing Medication Changes

The HS21 prescription form is the source document for community pharmacies to dispense medicines to patients, including those who have their medicines dispensed in instalments. However on occasion, issues can arise for instalment dispensing patients in the period between regular prescriptions being generated where there is a need to amend their medicines mid-cycle, for example a medication may be stopped, a new medication commenced or a dose changed. Additionally, there may be a change in patient circumstance, such as hospital/nursing home admission or death. Previous letters to GP practices¹ and community pharmacists^{2 3} have highlighted the risks associated with the provision of medicines in instalments.

Many GP practices have developed their own processes to make community pharmacies aware of mid-cycle changes for patients on instalment dispensing prescriptions. HSCB has however recently been made aware of several adverse incidents relating to communication issues about such changes.

We recommend that all GP practices and community pharmacies have robust communication systems in place in relation to instalment dispensing prescriptions. To assist practitioners in areas where systems have not yet been implemented, a template instalment dispensing communication pro-forma has been developed (attached) which may be of benefit; the form may be incorporated into the GP clinical system for ease of use.

Please note that this form is not intended to replace either the HS21 prescription form or systems which already exist and work well in local areas.

¹ <http://www.medicinesgovernance.hscni.net/wpfb-file/003-no3-risks-when-dispensing-medicines-into-monitored-dosage-systems-july-2010-41kb-pdf/>

² <http://www.medicinesgovernance.hscni.net/wpfb-file/risks-when-dispensing-medicines-into-monitored-dosage-systems-letter-to-cps-march-2010-pdf/>

³ <http://www.medicinesgovernance.hscni.net/wpfb-file/150720medicinessafetymatterscpvol3issue2-pdf/>

Thank you for your support with this to ensure that supply of medicines dispensed in instalments is as safe as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Brogan', written in a cursive style.

Joe Brogan
Asst Director Integrated Care
Head of Pharmacy & Medicines Management