

Medicines reuse for care homes and hospices

April 2020



To support potential shortages of end of life medicines, [a guide to medicines reuse for care homes and hospices](#) has been published by DHSC. **This should only be used as a last resort where no other stocks of the medicine are available and/or a suitable alternative can't be sourced in an appropriate timeframe** (as informed by the supplying pharmacy) **and there is an immediate patient need.**

Re-use of medicines may be an option if the following criteria are met;

- Consent must be documented from both the medicine donor and recipient to use a re-purposed medicine.
- The medicine must be from an unopened/unadulterated sealed pack or blister strip.
- The medicine must be in date and have been stored in line with the manufacturer's directions.
- The re-use of medicines must be under the supervision of a registered healthcare professional.

To ensure adequate flexibility for re-use of medicines, care homes and hospices are advised to proactively seek written permission from all patients for:

- **Their medicines (if no longer needed) to be made available for other patients and/or**
- **To receive a re-purposed medicine provided it is deemed safe for re-use by a healthcare professional.**

Whilst we are unaware of any specific stock shortages locally at this present time, hospices and care homes are advised to identify unused, sealed inhalers and medicines used to treat patients *end of life* for potential re-use (as defined by the guidance). These medicines should be placed in a sealed container, clearly marked as 'patient returns' and stored securely away from patient's regular medication rather than being returned to the pharmacy for destruction. Please continue to return other medicines to the pharmacy in the usual way.

If medicine has been returned from a COVID-19 positive patient it should be double bagged and quarantined for 5 days before being considered for reuse.

Clinicians are asked to be mindful of the quantities of medicines they prescribe and reminded not to prescribe 'just in case' as this will help maintain the supply chain and reduce the risk of stock shortages.

The full guidance and standard operating procedure is available here- [a guide to medicines reuse for care homes and hospices](#)

For further information, please contact the Medicines Management Teams on
01282 644801 (EL CCG) or 01254 282087 (BwD CCG)