

Guidance on Controlled Drugs Prescriptions

There have been various queries raised around the legal validity of prescriptions following issues with community pharmacists. This guidance will provide clarification to staff who may encounter similar issues in the future.

Date of Prescription

Controlled Drug prescriptions are valid for 28 days following the “appropriate date”. The appropriate date is stated by the *Medicines, Ethics and Practice Edition 37* as,

“is either the signature date or any other date indicated on the prescription (by the prescriber) as a date before which the drugs should not be supplied – whichever is later.”

EXAMPLE

Pharmacy Stamp	Age 40	Title, Forename, Surname & Address FIRST NAME SURNAME	
	D.o.B dd/mm/yyyy	Address Line 1	
		Address Line 2	
		Postcode	
Please don't stamp over age box			
Number of days' treatment N.B. Ensure dose is stated	7	NHS Number:	
Endorsements			
Pharmacy Name, Address Postcode Tel.Number			
METHADONE Mixture (1mg/ml)			
Daily: 40.00 (forty point zero zero) ml(1mg/ml)			
Total: 280.00 (two hundred and eighty) ml(1mg/ml)			
From: 8 Oct 2015 To: 14 Oct 2015			
Date	Dispense	Day's Dose	
Thu 8 Oct	40 ml	40 ml	
Fri 9 Oct	40 ml	40 ml	
Sat 10 Oct	80 ml	40 ml	
Sun 11 Oct	-----	40 ml	
Mon 12 Oct	40 ml	40 ml	
Tue 13 Oct	40 ml	40 ml	
Wed 14 Oct	40 ml	40 ml	
SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION			
Installments due on days when the pharmacy is closed should be dispensed on the day immediately prior to closure. If an instalment prescription covers more than one day and is not collected on the specified day the total amount prescribed less the amount prescribed for the days missed may be supplied.			
Signature of Prescriber Dr X		Date 01/10/2015 @ 12:00	
For dispenser No. of Prescrip. on form	Prescriber's name and address 123456		
	Dr X		
	NMS CRI RBU		
	140-142 Kings Cross Road		
	London		
	020 7833 7975	WC1X 9DS	
NHS	63101890767	FP10MDA0608	

For general Controlled Drugs the appropriate date is usually the signature date, found next to the prescriber signature box, as this is the only date found on the prescription. However CRI prescriptions for FP10MDA instalment prescriptions have dates of supply printed on them, as well as a signature date, which are usually in advance. The “appropriate date” in this case is the date listed as initial supply, and 28 days validity would thus commence from that date.

With the example here the date on the prescription is 1.10.2015, however the “appropriate date” from when the prescription starts is 8.10.2015. Subsequently this prescription would be valid for 28 days from 8.10.2015.

Note: the signature date cannot be after the first supply date

Supervision

Supervision is not a legal obligation upon a pharmacist even though it may be written on a prescription. For this reason it is imperative that we ensure service users within services on supervised prescriptions are attending pharmacies that are within agreed Pharmacy contract SLAs. This will mean we are working with community pharmacy partners that are fully supportive of the benefits of supervision.

Missed Collections

Similar to supervision, communicating missed collections by service users is not a legal requirement on a prescription. This is where arrangements are covered operationally by SLAs, and these are what ensure pharmacies communicate with services on agreed timescales. As with supervision it is again essential we work with pharmacies that have signed up to our Pharmacy Contract SLAs.