

## Medicines Optimisation Position Statement

Position statement	Recommendations for the usual duration of repeat prescriptions
Number:	012
Approved by Medicines Board:	January 2023
Date of planned review:	January 2025

The appropriate duration of any prescription should be decided by the prescriber, in conjunction with the patient, considering the medicine being prescribed, its monitoring requirements, the condition being treated and the individual patient's needs.

The usual duration of a repeat prescription is 28 days.

As such, shorter duration prescriptions should only be issued when a patient has a clinical need for their medication to be prescribed in smaller quantities. The community pharmacy will then supply the medication at shorter intervals to match the prescription duration.

The decision to supply medication in a Multi-compartment Compliance Aid (MCA) is independent of the decision regarding shorter prescription durations. However, any duration of a prescription longer than 28 days means that the medication cannot be put into an MCA. This is due to the expiry of medication outside of their original packaging and prescriptions of longer duration cannot be legally part dispensed, e.g., a 56-day prescription dispensed as two sets of 28 days.

Individuals who qualify under the Equality Act 2010 and who may need support with taking their medication can be assessed using an appropriate toolkit and it is the community pharmacists' responsibility to make a professional judgement of what is a reasonable and appropriate adjustment or intervention for that individual, including an MCA. Assessment and provision of MCAs is not covered by this document.

### When might it be appropriate to issue prescriptions of durations shorter than 28 days?

- Risk of overdose and it has been considered unsafe to give 28 days' supply, this could be due to confusion or self-harm.
- Frequent changes to the medication regime or titration of medicines to avoid medicines waste. Note if the patient has an MCA and changes are made to a medication, a complete set of new prescriptions for all medications is required, not just the changed medicine.
- Close monitoring of the medicine is required.
- Need medication supplied at shorter intervals due to a documented need by the prescriber, an example could include issues with adherence.
- If a patient has been assessed and considered appropriate for a Multi-compartment Compliance Aid (MCA) and the medication is unstable once removed from its original packaging, thus requiring an MCA to be made up and collected weekly. The Specialist Pharmacy Service Medicines Compliance Aid database includes drug stability in compliance aids,

information available at: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/usage-of-medicines-in-compliance-aids/>

**When might it be inappropriate to issue prescriptions of durations shorter than 28 days?**

- No clinical assessment has been undertaken by the prescriber.
- No clinical reason for the patient to only receive a short supply at a time.
- To support the provision of an MCA without clinical need, for the convenience of patients, care homes or carers.

When it is judged clinically appropriate for prescription durations of longer than 28 days to be used, then electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD) should be utilised. More information on eRD can be found here:

[NHS Frimley - Electronic Repeat Dispensing \(eRD\) \(icb.nhs.uk\)](https://www.frimley.icb.nhs.uk/policies-and-documents/medicines-optimisation/prescribing-policies/213-005-mog-position-statement-prescribing-guidance-for-patients-travelling-abroad/file)

A position statement for prescribing guidance, including prescription quantities, for patients travelling abroad is available on the following link:

<https://www.frimley.icb.nhs.uk/policies-and-documents/medicines-optimisation/prescribing-policies/213-005-mog-position-statement-prescribing-guidance-for-patients-travelling-abroad/file>

Any changes to a patient's existing medicines quantity should only be implemented after a careful risk and impact assessment and communication between the prescriber, community pharmacist and patient or the patient's representative.

Each of the Local Pharmaceutical Committees (LPC); Pharmacy Thames Valley, Community Pharmacy Surrey and Sussex and Community Pharmacy South Central, have their own position statements and guidance on 7-day prescribing, including multiple-compartment compliance aids. Please see links below:

1. The Thames Valley LPC statement on a multi-compartment compliance aid (MCA), Jan 2021. Pharmacy Thames Valley. Accessed Aug 2022 via [Medicines Compliance Aids \(MCA\) – Pharmacy Thames Valley](#)
2. Briefing note, Medicines compliance aids Guidance and FAQs for primary care providers, Jan 2020. Community Pharmacy Surrey and Sussex in conjunction with Surrey and Sussex LMCs. Accessed Aug 2022 via [Medicines Compliance Aids - LPC and LMC Guidance for Primary Care - Mar 2020 Final.pdf \(res-systems.net\)](#)
3. 7-day prescriptions. Community Pharmacy South Central. Accessed Aug 2022 via [CPSC 7-day prescriptions.pdf](#)