

Valid reasons to Synchronise Prescriptions for GP Practice

Care Homes work with a large number of repeat prescriptions each month and it is important that the ordering cycle runs smoothly to avoid medication errors and avoidable harm to care home patients. Care Homes should aim to order all repeat medication at the same time rather than at irregular times throughout the month; this will reduce the workload at the GP practice as there are less interim prescriptions.

Care homes run on a 28 day medication cycle. All patients should start their medication on the same day of the cycle (day1), this is to support care homes to manage medicine more effectively, minimise errors in ordering and to prevent residents running out of their medicine.

NICE social care guidelines (SC1): Managing medicines in care homes, recommends **prescribing the right amount of medicines to fit into the 28-day supply cycle if appropriate, and any changes that may be needed for prescribing in the future (Section 1.9.1)**

Monthly repeat prescriptions should all be ordered for the home at the same time. 'When required' medicines (PRN) should only be ordered when required and NOT routinely by the care home.

Reasons why you may need to synchronise medication

To keep the ordering process in line with the medication cycle, prescription quantities will need to be amended at times such as:

- **New Admission To Care Home** – *patient will have brought some medication in when admitted but quantities may not fit within the medication cycle.*
- **New Medication Started**– *if started mid cycle.*
- **Medication Changed** – *dose changed mid cycle, a new prescription must be raised with new instructions.*
- **Hospital Admission** –*medication supplied following discharge from hospital, home has a supply of irregular quantity left at the home following a hospital admission.*

Benefits of synchronisation

By synchronising your care homes prescriptions you will be helping to **reduce medicine waste** and cost to your surgery as blistered medication is often returned to the pharmacy if it does not fit the care homes medication cycle.

Time will be saved in the surgery and care home as all prescriptions will be ordered at the same time rather than dealing with irregular requests throughout the month.

When requesting for the prescriptions to be synchronised, care homes may use one of the following methods depending on where in the cycle they may be, **(a) request for the shortfall to be added to the monthly order** e.g. Aspirin 75mg tablets 1 to be taken daily, 28 tablets, home is short of 7 tablets for the current cycle, the requesting quantity would be 35 tablets, or

(b) issue a one off prescription for the shortfall only (depending on surgery preference) e.g. Aspirin 75mg tablets 1 to be taken daily, 28 tablets, home is short of 7 tablets for the current cycle, the order will be for a one off prescriptions for 7 tablets and then a further 28 tablets for the next cycle.

Note: It is important when synchronising prescriptions that surgery staff amend the quantity back to a 28 day supply, as soon as possible to avoid the next prescription request being out of line with the cycle.

Synchronising prescriptions should only happen when changes in circumstance occur. If dealt with effectively at the time of the event taking place it should not become a major problem.

Providers should use this guidance in conjunction with Medicine Patient Information Leaflets, NICE Guidance 'Managing Medicines in Care Homes' SC1 and should check the CQC website for recent updates. Prepared by Care Home Support, Medicines Optimisation Team, NHS Coventry & Warwickshire April 2019, reviewed July 2022.