

# Medicines Awareness

## for care homes

### Bulk Prescriptions

#### Background

Some care homes have multiple patients on the same medication which can mean multiple containers of the same product in the drug trolley. Bulk prescriptions can be a way of reducing this and also reducing the waste that is created if a patient leaves the home or passes away.

When a patient dies or leaves the home any medication prescribed for them should be destroyed as the home is not allowed to use it for other patients. This can create a lot of waste particularly for items such as nutritional supplements, thickeners or laxatives.

One way of reducing this potential waste is to introduce bulk prescriptions.

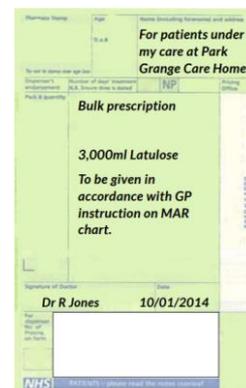
It has been recognised that bulk prescribing could provide the following benefits:

- Potential to reduce waste, saving money for the NHS – A study commissioned by the Department of Health (DH) in 2009 found £50 million worth of NHS supplied medicines are disposed of unused by care homes
- Reduction of space required in the drug trolley
- Reduces drug round time/dispensing time
- Save time when treating an outbreak (such as of scabies when all the residents require the same treatment)

#### What is bulk prescribing?

Issuing a bulk prescription allows the care home staff to use one supply for all residents, who are clinically identified as suitable for a particular prescribed medication, rather than named patient supplies.

A bulk prescription is an order for two or more patients bearing the name of a school or institution, e.g. a care home, in which at least 20 persons normally reside, for the treatment of at least ten of whom a particular doctor is responsible (registered with a particular GP practice).



## What is on a bulk prescription?

After identifying patients suitable for bulk prescriptions it is necessary to ensure that they have had or will be provided with an initial prescription bearing the service users name. This will ensure the medicine and specific directions appear on that service user's subsequent MAR charts. Any future prescriptions can then be ordered using a bulk prescription. A copy of the original prescription should be kept in the service users care plan.

A bulk prescription can be written or printed on an ordinary FP10 prescription.

It must include:

- The wording "for patients under my care at {the name of the care home}" (instead of the individual name of the patient)
- The date
- The words 'bulk prescription' – to identify the type of prescription
- The medicine that is being bulk prescribed
- The total quantity required for all service users on this medication
- The directions may state - "to be given in accordance with GP instruction on the MAR chart". Due to variation in doses for each patient, the patients MAR chart will need to provide the dose to be administered.

Prescription only medicines (POMs) cannot be prescribed on bulk prescriptions and the only appliances that can be prescribed are dressings that do not contain any medicinal products/ ingredients. Only drugs prescribable on the NHS are able to be prescribed on a bulk prescription.

The medication must be either:

- A 'P' pharmacy medicine – can be bought in a pharmacy or
- A 'GSL' product – 'general sales list' product that can be bought in a supermarket

The following medicines are considered suitable for bulk prescribing:

- Lactulose solution
- Adcal D3 tablets
- Senna tablets
- Movicol/Laxido/generic macrogol sachets
- Thickening agents
- Paracetamol tablets - up to 96 tablets only, quantity greater than this is a POM. (Service users taking regular paracetamol are therefore not suitable for bulk prescription)
- Paracetamol suspension 250mg/5ml

## Audit

It is important to have an accurate account of stock received into the home as well as that which is administered therefore a good audit process and clear documentation is essential.

Ideally an audit should be carried out every three months to check that stocks are being managed appropriately. Care staff will need to be trained to keep a record of their bulk stock which will then enable them to calculate how much is being used each month. They can then order a sufficient quantity for the coming month. They will also need to take into account any new patients that have been included on the bulk prescription as well as any that have stopped.

Further information on Bulk Prescriptions can be obtained from the Medicines Management Team at Walsall CCG Tel. 01922 619908.

Alternatively by clicking [here](#) for information on the PrescQipp website.

## Sources

PrescQipp Community Interest Company. <https://www.prescqipp.info/us/prescqipp/us>

For further advice, please contact the medicines management team at Walsall CCG Tel.  
01922 618388