

### Carer Communication Bulletin

*This bulletin has been produced to support the implementation of  
**'Optimising Medicines Support for Patients - Seven Day Prescribing & Multi-compartment  
Compliance Aids (MCA) Best Practice'** guidance*

Local guidance has been developed by Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board to support patients, carers, and healthcare professionals to optimise medication management. An accompanying [patient information leaflet](#) is also available for patient use.

The guidance states that **'MCAs (commonly known as dosette boxes or blister packs) are only suitable for people who manage their own medicines, and where these have been agreed as the most suitable option by a community pharmacist which can sometimes be chargeable. An MCA is not suitable for the majority of patients for safety reasons. Where an alternative sector considers an MCA may be suitable, a joint decision discussion is had and agreed with the usual community pharmacist. It is ultimately the community pharmacist's decision as to whether they supply a patient's medicines in an MCA'**.

The guidance applies to **new** patients that require medicines support aid and **existing** patients (opportunistically conducting a case-by-case review to determine if an MCA is the most appropriate medicines support aid). The guidance recognises:

- **Patient empowerment** - Patients should be encouraged to maintain independence and empowered to manage their own medicines' administration from original packaged medicine boxes.
- **Community Pharmacy compliance support**- Health and social care professionals should refer patients to the patients' preferred [Community Pharmacy](#) for medicines' administration support to allow consideration of whether reasonable adjustments must be made for the patient in line with Equality Act 2010.
- **Paid carers** – Carers should be trained to support patients take their medicines from original boxes. There is no requirement under the Equality Act 2010 to supply patients with MCAs should they have paid carers that can administer the medicines including in care homes and in domiciliary/supported living care settings.
- **Choice of support aid** – An MCA should not be relied on as the only option in helping a patient take their medicines. Other choices may be more suitable than an MCA and a safer option in helping manage the patients' individual needs e.g. reminder charts for memory support or easy open tops for dexterity issues. The Community Pharmacist is responsible for the choice of medicines support aid and can choose to provide MCAs to patients who do not fit under the Equality Act 2010 (may charge a small fee).
- **Drawbacks of MCAs** – They are not the ideal option for many patients for the following reasons:
  - Not all medicines can be placed within an MCA e.g. the medicine may not be stable outside of its original packaging and therefore may not work properly or may cause unexpected side effects.
  - "As required" oral medicines are not recommended for adding into an MCA. This may lead to patient confusion if using an MCA and several original boxes at the same time.
  - The trays required to produce an MCA result in significant plastic wastage.
  - Mid cycle medication changes mean new MCAs need to be made - delays can lead to patient harm or confusion where multiple MCAs are in the patient's home.

For further information, please read the Frequency Asked Questions (FAQs) section on pages 10-12 within full [guidance](#) or contact your ICS Pharmacy and Medication Optimisation Team via email:

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