

## **General Practice 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 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 a medicine support aid and **existing** patients (opportunistic 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 the Equality Act 2010.
- **Choice of support aid** - MCAs should not be relied on as the default solution in managing adherence/compliance, other choices are available, which may be more suitable than an MCA and a safer option in helping manage patients' individual needs. The Dispensing 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 (a fee may be charged for this service).
- **MCAs limitations** - Not all medicines are suitable for inclusion within MCAs due to stability issues once removed from original packaging and repackaged (also unlicensed practice; the pharmacological action of these products cannot be guaranteed). MCAs also increase medicines wastage.
- **Prescription duration** – Primary Care Prescribers are responsible for determining duration of prescription to be supplied. Short duration prescriptions (e.g. 7-day) are only needed on clinical and patient safety grounds. There is no obligation to provide a 7-day prescription for the purpose of filling an MCA.
- **Paid carers** - In line with the Equality Act 2010, the Community Pharmacy is under no obligation to supply patients with MCAs should they have paid carers that can administer the medicines. This includes care homes and domiciliary/supported living care. Please notify [acscommissioning.support@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:acscommissioning.support@hertfordshire.gov.uk) for Herts patients or for Essex email [BusinessSupportAdultSOVAs@essex.gov.uk](mailto:BusinessSupportAdultSOVAs@essex.gov.uk) where paid carers are not following this guidance.

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: [hweicbhv.medicinesoptimisationteam@nhs.net](mailto:hweicbhv.medicinesoptimisationteam@nhs.net)