Medicines Optimisation

Best Practice Guidance for care homes – *Bulletin 22*

Improving lives together
Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System

Monthly Medication Ordering – Overview

Care home staff, practice staff and pharmacies/dispensaries all have a vital role to play in the supply of medication to residents. It is very important that effective communication methods are used between all three. This guidance provides an overview of the ordering process.

NICE Guidelines for Ordering Medication[1]

The National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) published care home guidance in May 2014 relating to the development of care home medicines policies.

A care home medication policy should include a process for ordering medicines, which ensures that medicines prescribed for a resident are not administered to other residents.

The process should cover:

- **Protected time for ordering and checking** medicines delivered to home.
- The home having at **least two** members of staff who are competent to order medicines, although at any one-time ordering can be carried out by one member of staff.
- How to order repeat, acute and 'when required' medicines from the GP practice (and during out-of-hours). NHS Digital and the ICB are supporting care services to have online access to a resident's GP record to allow online ordering via "proxy access". If a care service is interested in this service, please contact nwicb.medsqueries@nhs.net .
- Which records to make when ordering medicines (for example: pharmacy supplied either paper/electronic, NHS online access, email, a copy of the prescription repeat).
- How to inform the supplying pharmacy of the medication that has been requested and those medications that have not been request but need to remain on the Medicines Administration Record (MAR) or electronic MAR (eMAR) chart. The pharmacy need to be made aware of any changes to medicines including when they are stopped or changed.

There should also be a process for determining the best system for supplying medicines. Generally original packs will be dispensed but monitored dosage systems may be in place if it is deemed best for the resident and encourages their independence. Care home staff should seek support from other health and social care staff where appropriate.

Communication

It is important that care staff, GP practice staff and the supplying pharmacy communicate regularly with each other. It is good practice for the care home to have a named contact at both the practice and the pharmacy as this makes it much easier to deal with any problems or seek advice. Any contact between the care home and other healthcare professionals should be recorded. Some homes have a communication folder (paper/electronic) and other homes record information in a resident's care plan. The method of communication should be detailed in the medicines policy. Care homes should be using NHS email to communicate any information that contains patient identifiable information. Please contact the NHS Digital team if you do not have NHS email or need advice. nwicb.digitalsocialcare@nhs.net

Care Home Medication Ordering Schedule for Monthly Medication

WEEK ONE	WEEK TWO	WEEK THREE	WEEK FOUR
First day of new medication cycle.	**Start the monthly ordering process.** *(Protected time)*	**Prescriptions will automatically be sent electronically to the nominated pharmacy.**	**Pharmacy to deliver monthly order** (at least 3 working days before new cycle starts)
Any remaining balances of medication from the previous cycle to be carried forward to the new medication cycle via MAR/eMAR.	Prescription requests to be sent to GP practice/online ordering. (Please ensure that the person whose medication is being requested has the correct nomination* set.)	Pharmacy to contact care service if there are discrepancies/issues with the prescriptions.	**Check received medications and MAR charts for accuracy and report discrepancies immediately.** *(Protected time)*
Protected time should be considered for first day of new cycle to allow the change over to new cycle.	Pharmacy to receive copy of order and MAR chart information for next cycle.	**Care service to action discrepancies/issues as soon as possible.**	Care service should book in the new medication cycle booked in as soon as possible to allow time for issues to be resolved.
	Care service must have access to the information of which medications have been requested.	(If a medication is unavailable due to national shortages etc. then it is the duty of the pharmacy to contact the GP for alternative not the care service)	

*When you request a prescription online, you can have your prescription sent electronically to a pharmacy of your choice. This is called a nomination. Once you nominate a pharmacy:
- you will no longer need to collect paper prescriptions from your GP surgery.
- your nominated pharmacy will receive your prescriptions until you change or remove your nominated pharmacy.
- any outstanding prescriptions you have ordered may still arrive at your current nominated pharmacy.

It is very important that if any prescriptions (e.g. antibiotics) have been sent to a pharmacy OTHER than the one the care home normally uses for the monthly medication, the nomination might have been changed. If you use online access/proxy you can view and change, if necessary. If the home is still ordering manually paper/
emails then check with your usual pharmacy provider to make sure it has been changed back.

Key points
- Every care home should have a policy which details the ordering procedure.
- It is important that Medication Administration Record (MAR/eMAR) charts are kept updated.
- The most recent 'repeat slip' should be used to order if paper ordering process is in place.
- Any discharge information, clinical letters and any other relevant information must be actioned as appropriate and in a timely manner.
- The care home is responsible for managing mid-cycle ordering.
- If a new resident moves to the home or an existing resident has a change in medication, care home staff need to know how to communicate this to both the practice and pharmacy e.g. GP practice registration forms, nominate pharmacy, consent form if using proxy access to access online services.

References
1 - 'Checklist for health and social care staff developing and updating a care home medicines policy - Implementing the NICE guideline on managing medicines in care homes' Published May 2014 (accessed January 2024)
https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/sc1/resources/checklist-for-care-home-medicines-policy-pdf-13716829
2 – NICE. A quick guide for care home managers providing medication support.
https://www.nice.org.uk/about/nice-communities/social-care/quick-guides/effective-record-keeping-ordering-medicines (accessed Jan 2024)

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1.0	December 2016	JC	Final	Agreed at SMT
1.1	December 2018	JC	Draft	Update logos, check contents, font sized increased to 11
2.0	May 2019	JC	Final	Changes approved by May 19 Senior Team Meeting. Agreed review date to be set for 3 years
2.1	January 2024	Medicine Optimisation Team - RH	Draft	Changes made to reflect Digital process
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