NHS
Suffolk and
North East Essex

Good Practice for Care Homes

Medicines storage - Temperature Monitoring Guide

Purpose of this guidance

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) advises that:

'Care providers must ensure that policies and procedures consider how staff will monitor the temperature of medicines storage areas. This will help to make sure medicines are stored according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Providers should have a system or process for staff to know where to escalate concerns about storage or to seek advice.'

This guidance seeks to support care homes to meet these requirements, thereby ensuring that medicines are fit for purpose at the point of administration to residents.

All medicines must be stored according to the manufacturer's guidance.

A range of medicines need to be refrigerated, for example insulins, antibiotic liquids, injections, eye drops and creams. These medicines must be stored between 2°C and 8°C.

Most other medicines will be suitable for storage between 15°C and 25°C.

Some medicines may have different storage requirements once opened.

To find out if a product has specific temperature storage requirements, check the packaging. You can also refer to the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) or visit the electronic Medicines Compendium (eMC)

Temperature monitoring and recording

Care Homes should

- make sure that staff understand how to read thermometers and why this is necessary.
- use an appropriate thermometer to record minimum, maximum and current temperatures of the fridge daily (see Appendix 1 Fridge Temperature Monitoring Form).
- ensure that any thermometer is appropriately positioned in a central location.
    - For a fridge probe ensure cables do not interfere with the fridge door seal. This could cause the temperature to fall outside the recommended temperature range.
    - For a room thermometer position away from heat source or air conditioning outlets.
- **reset** the thermometer after each reading.
- check and record the room temperature of the medicines storage area daily (see Appendix 2 Room Temperature Monitoring Form).
- make sure that staff know what to do when the temperature of the medicines storage area and/or fridge is outside of the recommended range.
- record any actions taken. This includes seeking advice on whether the medicines are still appropriate for use.

Medicines fridge standards

Care Homes should

- use a fridge of a suitable standard to ensure that medicines are kept at the correct temperature.
- ensure that fridges used for the storage of medicines are secure and accessible only to authorised staff.
- ensure that fridges used for the storage of medicines are not used to store any other items, including foods.
- take steps to ensure that fridges used for the storage of medicines are not switched off.
- not store large amounts of medicines. This can lead to inadequate airflow and potential freezing.
- not store medicines in contact with the sides or bottom of the fridge.
- rotate medicines stock according to the care home's policy and regularly check the expiry dates.
- regularly clean and defrost the fridge in line with manufacturers guidance and keep dated records of this.

What to do when things go wrong

Care Homes should act immediately to

- inform a manager when the temperature of the medicines storage area and/or fridge is outside of the recommended range.
- check for and rectify any obvious causes e.g. rooms air conditioning being turned off, fridge unplugged etc.
- secure and quarantine affected medicines with a **"DO NOT USE"** label.
- gather the following information, then seek the advice of a pharmacy professional who will advise on next steps:
    - maximum recorded temperature the medicines were exposed to.
    - minimum recorded temperature the medicines were exposed to.
    - length of time the temperature was out of range (starting from the time the thermometer was last reset).
    - medicine name, pharmaceutical form (tablet, capsule, injection etc.), batch number and expiry date.
    - name of manufacturer.
    - quantity affected.
- dispose of any spoiled medicines according to the care home's policy **only** if instructed to do so by the pharmacy professional.
- inform the prescriber (or out of hours service) to arrange a replacement supply.

References

1. Care Quality Commission, Storing medicines in fridges in care homes. Storing medicines in fridges in care homes - Care Quality Commission accessed on 12.6.2025.

2. Specialist Pharmacy Services, Temperature management. Temperature management – SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice accessed 12.6.2025.

3. NICE SC1 Managing medicines in care homes. Managing medicines in care homes accessed 12.6.2025.

Produced by the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB) Medicines Optimisation Team
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Appendix 1: Fridge Temperature Monitoring Form

Temperatures must remain between +2°C and +8°C. If it is outside of this range, please take appropriate action. Thermometer must be reset after each reading.

Month _____ **Year _____**

Date	Time	Current Temp	Min Temp	Max Temp	Reset (tick)	Check By	Action taken if out of range (+2°C and +8°C) if necessary.
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Fridge defrosted and cleaned by:		**Date fridge defrosted and cleaned:**	
Fridge temperature checked every day (Y/N)		**Any necessary action taken (Y/N)**	
Reviewed by:		**Date:**	

Appendix 2: Room Temperature Monitoring Form

Temperature must remain between +15°C and +25°C. If it is outside of this range, please take appropriate action. *Please be aware that monitoring needs to be completed more regularly during periods of extreme temperatures.

Month _____ **Year _____**

Date	Current temperature	Checked by	Time	Action taken if out of range (+15°C and +25°C) if necessary.
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Room temperature checked every day (Y/N)		**Any necessary action taken (Y/N)**	
Reviewed by:		**Date:**	