

Dear Care Home Manager

Medication Returns

NHS Lothian alongside the Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) strive to ensure that we get the best value from medicines and that medication returns are minimised whilst ensuring excellent patient care and safety. This will help ensure sustainable resources for future working.

Medicines are valuable and costly to the NHS. All medicines returned to community pharmacies are destroyed; they can not be used for anyone else. After discussion with representatives from community pharmacy contractors, the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Care it was decided that we would implement a sign off checklist in care homes within the four HSCP that make up NHS Lothian. Limiting returns to those detailed in the checklist below will stop any inappropriate returns and reduce waste.

This checklist was initially devised by NHS Tayside and has been adapted for use in all Health Boards in Scotland. The checklist (see appendix 1) must be used by the care home when returning medicines to the community pharmacy. This checklist must be signed off by the care home manager/deputy and attached to each box of returns along with a copy of the returns book. The community pharmacy drivers have been asked only to collect return medicines when the checklist has been completed.

To help managers and care home staff the following Care Inspectorate guidance below details the **ONLY** situations when it is appropriate to return medicines:

- **Medication from deceased patients**
- **Medication which is date expired**
- **Medication that has been stopped by the clinician**
- **Medication that has been dropped**

It is unacceptable to return any medicine which the patient is still prescribed unless it has reached its expiry date. Medication policies should follow the above guidance.

Excess medication should be carried forward to the next month and annotated on the new MAR chart or electronic MAR system.

Actions for Care Homes

1. Identify one or two senior staff members who can be medicines returns champions and would be suitable to sign the returns checklist
2. Communicate to all care staff the correct medicine returns policy to ensure that only appropriate medicines are returned
3. Introduce the new medication returns checklist to staff

The community pharmacy supplying your care home will provide further information if required and audit the waste management process within your care home where applicable. We would be grateful for your support with this initiative to ensure safe, appropriate and cost-effective patient care.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact a member of the pharmacy team on pc.prescribing@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk Please put MEDICINE WASTE POLICY in the subject title.


Please feel free to contact one of the following for further information:

David Marshall, Care Inspectorate Pharmacist - david.marshall@careinspectorate.com


Heather Molloy, Scottish Care - heather.molloy@scottishcare.org

We would like to thank you in advance for your assistance with this.


Yours faithfully



Judith Proctor
Chief Officer
Edinburgh HSCP



Morag Barrow
Chief Officer
Midlothian HSCP



Fiona Wilson
Chief Officer
East Lothian HSCP



Alison White
Chief Officer
West Lothian HSCP

Appendix 1

CARE HOME MEDICATION RETURNS FORM

This form must be completed for all medicines being returned to community pharmacy.

Returns will only be accepted by drivers if accompanied by both:

- this signed Care Home Medication Returns Form
- the Care Home's own approved and completed returns form if applicable

Care Home Name: _____

I verify that the medication returns dated _____ have been checked by myself as care home manager (or deputy in the absence of manager) and meet NHS Lothian's policy for medication returns and wastage.

1. Returns only include:

- **Medication from deceased patients**
- **Medication which is date expired**
- **Medication that has been stopped by the clinician**
- **Medication that has been dropped**

2. No medication has been returned that is still in date and which the patient is currently prescribed.

3. Food supplements, non-medicated dressings and appliances such as catheters or stoma bags **can be** disposed of in the general waste providing all patient identifying material, i.e. dispensing label has been removed.

Medication returns are fully documented on the returns sheet for each patient with a valid reason for return.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Manager's Name: _____ Position: _____

Name and signature of person assembling medication for return:-

Name: _____ Signature: _____