

Title: Publication of ICS Position Statement on 7 day Prescribing

7 day prescriptions are provided to patients so their medication can be dispensed and supplied for one week at a time. There is often confusion regarding when it is appropriate to use 7 day prescriptions, particularly for patients having their medicines dispensed in to monitored dosage systems (MDS).

The South Yorkshire Integrated Medicines Optimisation Committee has endorsed an [ICS position statement on 7 day prescribing](#) to support prescribers and community pharmacists to identify when 7 day prescribing is appropriate or not.

7-day prescriptions are appropriate for patients who:

- Frequently require a change in medication, to reduce the risk of waste.
- Are undergoing a period of titration or review of treatment.
- Are considered to be at risk of medication overuse (e.g. due to self-harm or confusion) and it is not safe to provide them with longer than 7 days' supply.
- Are prescribed medications with stability issues when supplied in a Medicines Compliance Aid (MCA)* sometimes referred to as Monitored Dosage System (MDS) or NOMAD

7-day prescriptions are not appropriate and should not be used:

- When the above circumstances are not met
- If the prescriber deems it unnecessary
- Simply to support the provision of a compliance aid/MDS
- Simply because the patient is a resident in a care home or has a domiciliary care worker.

Patient review and responsibilities when changing prescribing interval:

- Should clinicians wish to make changes to prescribing periodicity for existing patients, the responsibility for reviewing and assessing the patient sits entirely with the prescriber.
- It is imperative that practices and the local pharmacy teams work closely to ensure patients requiring support with medicines adherence can explore options for reasonable adjustments.
- A blanket shift from 7-day to 28-day prescribing would significantly increase workload for both pharmacies and GP practices. A phased approach to reviewing existing 7 day prescriptions is encouraged.

7 day prescriptions and monitored dosage systems (MDS):

Over the years there has been increased demand on pharmacies for MDS provision, often from other healthcare professionals. When faced with a request from practice colleagues some pharmacies have requested 7 day prescriptions to support MDS supply. This has led to an increase in demand for 7-day prescriptions in certain parts of South Yorkshire.

It should be noted:

- There is no contractual requirement for GP Practices to provide 7-day prescriptions simply for the provision of an MDS. Prescribers retain professional and clinical jurisdiction over the length/duration of a prescription.
- There is no contractual requirement or funded service for community pharmacies to dispense medicines into MDS. Community pharmacists retain professional jurisdiction over whether it is a reasonable adjustment that medicines are dispensed into MDS. This includes

an equality act assessment from a pharmacy perspective (which will include safety and financial considerations). Guidance on this can be found [here](#). Pharmacies should not be put under pressure to supply MDS.

- If pharmacies determine that a patient needs an MDS, this should not result in an automatic request for a 7-day prescription.
- Issuing 7-day prescriptions places a significant resource and workload burden on General Practice, requiring more staff time and operational processes than standard prescribing. GP Practices must not be put under pressure to issue 7-day prescriptions without good reason.
- Preparing MDS places a significant resource and workload burden on a community pharmacy, requiring more staff time, accuracy checks and operational processes than standard dispensing.
- Given the current financial environment some pharmacies may reduce MDS provision. Practices need to be aware they may receive queries from patients who may experience cessation of MDS supply. Some pharmacies may offer a private service for MDS provision for a fee.
- If for patient safety or medicines stability reasons MDS needs to be supplied weekly to a patient, 7 day prescriptions are required because pharmacies are not allowed under the NHS Pharmaceutical Regulations 2013 to dispense in instalments against FP10 prescriptions. Pharmacies must supply the full quantity/duration prescribed i.e. 28 days in one supply.

For patients who continue to receive MDS on a 28-day prescription length:

- Any change to any medicine during the 28-day cycle will require the prescriber to issue a completely new full prescription for all items for the full four-week period.
- The pharmacy will need to supply a full new 28-day MDS pack, including all medicines, regardless of what has already been dispensed.

Role of other providers:

For all healthcare providers, as well as colleagues working in social care settings or home care providers, please note that the decision to dispense medication in an MDS is solely for the community pharmacy contractor to decide based on assessment of patient needs, medicine suitability, and safety and financial considerations from the pharmacy perspective. Please do NOT request MDS supply, if you feel a patient is struggling with adherence please highlight this to the pharmacy to consider an equality act assessment.

Other health and social care providers can NOT mandate that medicine is dispensed via MDS.

Further resources on 7 day prescribing and MDS supply:

[South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board \(ICB\) MDS Position Statement – Appropriate Use of Monitored Dosage Systems \(MDS\)](#)

[CPSY Multi Compliance Aid \(MCA\) Briefing Sept 2025](#)

[7 day prescription Guidance Sept 2025](#)

[MDS Contractor Guide Sept 2025](#)

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