

Medicines re-use scheme for Oxfordshire care homes during the Covid-19 pandemic

On 28th April 2020 the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in conjunction with NHS England and NHS Improvement issued a Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) '[Running a medicines re-use scheme in a care home or hospice setting](#)'¹. It allows care homes and hospices in England to use medicines labelled for one person who no longer needs them for another person. The guidance has been developed in response to increasing pressure on the medicines supply chain during the Covid-19 pandemic and applies only during this period. The recommendations override the normal practice of disposing of any unwanted medication. This will enable people to receive essential medicines if they cannot be obtained via normal routes within the required time frame.

The Medicines Optimisation in Care Homes (MOCH) team have developed some guidance² which has been approved for use by the OCCG Area Prescribing Committee, to supplement the national SOP. It is recommended that Oxfordshire care homes adopt the local guidance² which must be read in conjunction with the DHSC publication¹

Care homes that choose to operate the scheme must update their local medicines policy to include a Medicines Re-use Guidance for the duration of Covid-19 pandemic. It is also recommended that each care home nominates a Medicines Re-use Scheme Lead to act as an expert in the safe and effective delivery of the scheme.

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document³ provides answers to common questions related to medicines re-use scheme such as storage, administration and documentation. Care homes are encouraged to refer to the document to clarify any areas of enquiry. The Medicines Optimisation in Care Homes (MOCH) team will be happy to support the implementation of the scheme and can be contacted with further questions or concerns via email (see contact details below).

The Medicines Re-use Scheme guidance, as well as the FAQ document will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect current national guidance. Once the current emergency is over, care homes will be expected to return to normal practice. The decision to cease the scheme will be communicated to care providers via normal channels.

Medicines Optimisation in Care Homes (MOCH) team

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(9am – 5pm Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays)

References:

1. Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) "Coronavirus (COVID-19) SOP: Running a medicines re-use scheme in a care home or hospice"
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reuse-of-medicines-in-a-care-home-or-hospice>
2. Guidance to support the implementation of the national: Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) standard operating procedure (SOP): Running a medicines re-use scheme in a care home setting
3. Medicines re-use scheme - Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

The Guidance and FAQ documents may be found on the MOCH webpage (scroll down to the bottom of the page) <https://www.oxfordshireccg.nhs.uk/professional-resources/medicines-care-homes.htm>