

Community Pharmacists and the Out of Hours Service ***Working in Partnership to Deliver Seamless Patient Care***

The Community Pharmacy is a key point of access for patients and the public to unscheduled care, particularly over weekends and public holidays. A number of tools are now available for pharmacists to use in their delivery of unscheduled care, such as:

1 National PGD for urgent supply of repeat medicines

- Can be used for any patient that presents to a community pharmacy provided they are registered with a GP who is registered to practice in Scotland.
- Evidence of previous supply can take a variety of forms e.g. patient's word, repeat slip or old packaging. Depending on the nature of the drug requested the patient's word can often be sufficient.
- One full cycle can be supplied or any quantity below this if considered more appropriate. You should always consider the consequences of not making a supply of regular repeat medication to a patient.
- Pharmacists must ensure they have signed and returned the PGD authorisation form for each Health Board they work in.
- A pharmacist is eligible to make supplies as soon as they have signed the form.
- Contractors need to ensure all staff working in their pharmacy (including locums) know where the Unscheduled Care folder and CPUS forms are kept.
- Access to medication should generally be resolved via the community pharmacist with the notable exceptions of Controlled Drugs or drugs for a clinical condition which has changed or if the patient is describing new symptoms.

2 NHS Minor Ailment Service (eMAS)

- Allows those patients exempt from prescription charges to access OTC medication free-of-charge if appropriate following a consultation.

3 Direct Referral Process (contacts listed in Unscheduled Care folder)

Can be used if neither of the above tools enable the pharmacist to deal with a particular patient's enquiry or ailment AND it is not appropriate for the patient to wait until their own GP surgery re-opens. Each Health Board has their own direct referral system, and it should be used to:

- Arrange for a patient to be seen by the GP OOH service
- Discuss whether patient referral is appropriate
- Query a prescription written during the OOH period or request a prescription for an item not covered by the PGD.

Note: There is no benefit advising the patient to call NHS 24 for nurse triage where they have already been assessed by a healthcare professional.

Feedback on your experience of NHS 24, the GP OOH service or the Unscheduled Care folder are welcomed, and any comments or enquiries should be sent to:

pharmacyenquiries@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk