Palliative care resources
for community pharmacy

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INTRODUCTION

This interactive PDF is the electronic ‘companion’ to the Palliative Care Resources folder for community pharmacy and can be used as a quick reference, giving you the basic content with links to external documents. The folder itself (as illustrated) should be available in each community pharmacy and contains complete, updated information, as well as a Contacts sheet (front pocket – for you to maintain) and a flow chart (section 2 – to display).

Background

A Community Pharmacy Palliative Care Network was set up in 2001 as part of the Pharmaceutical Care Model Schemes to improve access to both palliative care medication and appropriate pharmaceutical advice. A recent evaluation found that knowledge about the network is low amongst pharmacists and GPs. Although this network has improved access, there are still reports of patients/carers visiting up to five pharmacies before getting help.

Macmillan Pharmacist Facilitator Project report

The three year Macmillan Pharmacist Facilitator Project (2009-2012) was designed to address gaps in practice and explore a new service delivery model for community pharmacy palliative care services. The report (click thumbnail), produced in conjunction with the University of Strathclyde, details the three phases of the project and describes an ‘evidence based’ model for community pharmacy palliative care services.

Palliative care – everyone’s concern

Palliative care encompasses both generalist and specialist palliative care. Generalist palliative care forms part of the regular care of patients and support for families that is provided in all care settings by all healthcare professionals including community pharmacists. Although patient numbers can be low and often we have to guess that the person is at a palliative stage, which can make it difficult, it goes without saying that at this time in a person’s life we all need to do our best to support people with palliative care needs and their families.
Acknowledgements

The Palliative Care Resources folder has been developed by the Macmillan Pharmacist Facilitator Project Team. We gratefully acknowledge the hard work and enthusiasm of all who contributed to the folder:

- Nadia Afzal, Carolyn Mackay, Annamarie McGregor and Karen Menzies, Macmillan Pharmacist Facilitators
- Carol Andrews, Macmillan Pharmacist Facilitator Project Administrator
- Janet Trundle, Macmillan Specialist Palliative Care Pharmacist
- Elayne Harris, Area Pharmacy Specialist (Palliative Care)
- Michiel van der Lugt, Omnis Partners.
What’s new

January 2014
The Palliative Care Resources interactive PDF has been issued for the first time. Any changes in the future will be listed here by date, and links to the relevant section from this page will allow you to keep up to date quickly.
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Contacts

Specialist Pharmacists (Palliative Care)
Susan Addie
Tel: 01505 706 542 Mobile: 07880 786 659
Email: susan.addie@ggc.scot.nhs.uk
Carolyn Mackay
Tel: 0141 557 7437 Mobile: 07775 012 560
Email: carolyn.mackay@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Macmillan Lead Pharmacist (Palliative Care)
Elayne Harris
Tel: 0141 427 8248 Mobile: 07876 478 140
Email: elayne.harris@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

NHS GG&C out-of-hours service
Professional to Professional
tel 0141 636 8412

Hospices (24/7 advice)
Marie Curie Hospice (Glasgow)
Tel: 0141 557 7400
Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice
Tel: 0141 429 5599
St Margaret of Scotland Hospice
Tel: 0141 952 1141
ACCORD Hospice, Paisley
Tel: 0141 581 2000
Ardgowan Hospice, Greenock
Tel: 01475 726 830
St Vincent’s Hospice, Howwood
Tel: 01505 705 635
Beatson Palliative Care Team, Glasgow
Tel: 0141 301 7000
Children’s Hospice Robin House
Tel: 01389 722 055

Macmillan pharmacist facilitator project
Project lead
Dr Kate McCusker
Email: catherine.mccusker@nhs.net
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Email: charanpreetsran@nhs.net

Facilitators
Glasgow South and East Renfrewshire
Alex McMillan, Carol Pettigrew
East/West Dunbartonshire
Jane Stuart, Raina Morris
North West Glasgow
Pauline Dowds, Raina Morris
North East Glasgow
Nadia Afzal, Leighanne Bee
Inverclyde and Renfrewshire
Sandra Reynolds, Anne McGowan

Websites
Further information on palliative care at:
www.palliativecareggc.org.uk
www.palliativedrugs.com
www.palliativecareguidelines.scot.nhs.uk

Some websites for patients and carers are listed on the Patient information page.
Providing safe and effective palliative care

Wherever possible please prioritise the dispensing of medication known to be used in palliative care. Feedback from nurses and patients indicates that the pharmacies that simply prioritise all CD prescriptions give the best service.

1. **Confirm urgency**

2. **Check the prescription:**
   - Is it legal?
   - Is it appropriate?
   - Discuss with GP if formulation/amp size is not on network drug list.

3. **In stock and urgent**
   - Prioritise and dispense as soon as possible.
   - High dose opioid: Discuss with patient/carer, GP or nurse if you have no history of high dose opioid or >50% increase from previous script (see Reducing dosing errors).

4. **Not in stock and urgent**
   - Liaise with network pharmacy and use courier service if person cannot travel.
   - If high dose opioid required, OOH NHS 24 (see Contacts) will give you access to the medication history in the Emergency Care Summary, with patient’s consent.

5. **Not urgent**
   - Order and dispense in usual manner.
   - If required, can you give appropriate advice? e.g., opioid conversion (see Opioid conversion chart), compatibilities, symptom management, patient/carer support.

6. **Use the resources pack and relevant palliative care websites** (see Palliative Care Resources folder).

7. **Contact nearest network pharmacist or specialist palliative care pharmacist.**
   - OOH: use DN OOH contact/NHS GG&C OOH service, Professional to Professional tel 0141 636 8412 and local hospice/Beatson Oncology Centre (see Contacts).
Practice points

> Advise the patient/carer how long it will take.

> If the item prescribed is an ampoule for a syringe pump, please be aware that most district nurse day services finish at 4.30pm and it can take up to forty minutes to set up a new syringe pump.

> Consider contacting the GP practice or district nurse service to highlight or discuss any potential delays.

> If you receive a palliative care prescription for a strength or ampoule size not on the list for Palliative care drugs in network pharmacies, please contact the prescriber.
PHARMACETICAL CARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOL

The pharmaceutical care needs assessment tool for palliative care is part of a NHS Education for Scotland resource for registered pharmacists; The pharmaceutical care of people requiring palliative care. The tool can be downloaded (click on any of the thumbnails) and used on its own or in conjunction with an Aide memoire – quick guide (see page 13-20 of the resource).

A master copy of the assessment tool that can be photocopied, is also provided in the resource folder.

We would encourage you to use this tool to identify care issues for this group of patients who may need more supportive care.

> Page one is a list of questions about common issues palliative patients may experience.

> Page two and three give some practical information about how to treat some common symptoms and side effects.

Any interventions/care needs that are identified can either be recorded electronically on a Patient’s Medication Record (PMR) or a paper copy of this assessment tool can be used and stored securely within the pharmacy. As a patient’s condition changes and/or deteriorates their palliative care needs may change over time so reassessment may be required.

Acknowledgement

The needs assessment tool was developed as part of the 2011 review by the guardians of the NES Pharmacy education resource The pharmaceutical care of people requiring palliative care. It is similar in design to pre-existing guidance for care plans for other therapeutic areas for the Chronic Medication Service (CMS).
**COMMUNITY PHARMACY PALLIATIVE CARE NETWORK**

Please put the leaflet that you have received (as illustrated) separately in the CD cabinet. A copy of the leaflet text is included in this section.

All network pharmacies have additional resources, in particular:

- Symptom Management in Advanced Cancer
- NEWT Guidelines 2012
- The Syringe Driver, 3rd Edition
- The ABC of Palliative care
- Palliative Care Formulary (PCF4)

PCF4 is now available online, free of charge, from The Knowledge Network to those with an NES Athens username and password.

**Supporting safe, effective and efficient provision of palliative care**

Although in most circumstances, the patient’s usual community pharmacist should be the first port of call, if the medication is not available within a reasonable time the nearest network pharmacy should be contacted by the first community pharmacist, the patient’s GP or District Nurse, to arrange prompt supply.

Within the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area, there are 71 community pharmacies participating in the above network to provide additional palliative care support to patients. The network pharmacies service includes:

- Retaining a stock of specialised palliative care medicine. Some of the medication strengths and formulations are specific due to the volume limitations in syringe pumps and for bolus subcutaneous injections.
- Advice and support on palliative care medications to other pharmacists, GPs and District Nurses.
- A courier service for the transport of urgent palliative care prescriptions and medications.

**Out-of-hours**

When a palliative care prescription is required to be dispensed urgently out-of-hours (and the medicine is not available in GP OOH centre), contact the NHS GG&C out-of-hours service to access a network pharmacist. (See Contacts.)
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Key points

GPs
> For some medications or formulations used in palliative care, ampoule size and strength can be specific due to their volume, risk of precipitation and syringe pump compatibility. Please prescribe exactly from the palliative care drugs list on this leaflet.
> To comply with legal requirements, ensure that directions are written on the prescription.
> If medication is urgently required, please communicate this on the prescription or by phoning the pharmacy.

District Nurses
> If you are collecting a prescription from the GP surgery, check if it is the medication, strength and ampoule size required and if it is a CD, that it is written properly.
> If urgent, advise the pharmacy team.

Pharmacists
> Wherever possible, establish the urgency of the prescription when it is handed in and appropriately prioritise dispensing of palliative care medication.
> If the medication strength or ampoule size prescribed is not on the list, contact the prescriber to discuss.
> Confirm recent opioid dose, especially if the prescriptions is for >30mg of morphine or equivalent and you have no PMR history for the patient. Check that the dose increase is safe.
> Be alert for any mix-ups between modified release and immediate release preparations.
> For specialist palliative care pharmacy advice, please contact one of the Specialist Pharmacists (Palliative Care) or the Macmillan Lead Pharmacist (Palliative Care). Details can be found in the Contacts section.
Palliative care drugs in network pharmacies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfentanil</td>
<td>500 microgram/ml 2ml injection ▲ 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonazepam</td>
<td>1mg/ml 1ml injection ▲ 5 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclizine</td>
<td>50mg/ml 1ml injection 15 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dexamethasone</td>
<td>4mg/ml 1ml injection 20 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dexamethasone</td>
<td>2mg tablets 50 tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamorphine</td>
<td>5mg injection 5 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamorphine</td>
<td>10mg injection 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamorphine</td>
<td>30mg injection 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamorphine</td>
<td>100mg injection 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamorphine</td>
<td>500mg injection ▲ 5 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diclofenac</td>
<td>75mg/3ml injection 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glycopyrronium</td>
<td>200mcg/ml 1ml injection 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haloperidol</td>
<td>5mg/ml 1ml injection 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyoscine Butylbromide</td>
<td>20mg/1ml injection 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyoscine Hydrobromide</td>
<td>400mcg/ml 1ml injection 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levomepromazine</td>
<td>25mg/ml 1ml injection 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levomepromazine</td>
<td>6mg tablets (unlicensed) 28 tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorazepam</td>
<td>1mg tablets ▲ 28 tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metoclopramide</td>
<td>10mg/2ml injection 20 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midazolam</td>
<td>5mg/ml 2ml injection ▲ 20 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midazolam buccal liquid (Epistatus®)</td>
<td>10mg/ml ▲ 1 x 5ml bottle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midazolam</td>
<td>Oral Solution 10mg/5ml 100ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midazolam</td>
<td>Injection 10mg/1ml 20 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midazolam</td>
<td>Injection 30mg/1ml 20 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octreotide (stored in fridge)</td>
<td>100 microgram/ml 1ml injection ▲ 5 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octreotide (stored in fridge)</td>
<td>500 microgram/ml 1ml injection ▲ 5 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxycodone</td>
<td>10mg/ml injection 20 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxycodone</td>
<td>20mg/2ml injection 20 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxycodone</td>
<td>5mg/5ml oral solution 250ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxycodone</td>
<td>Injection 200mg/1ml ▲ 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenobarbital</td>
<td>Injection 10mg 10 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water for injection</td>
<td>10ml 20 amps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium chloride 0.9%</td>
<td>Injection 10ml 10 amps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Network pharmacies details
Move the cursor over a pharmacy address to reveal its opening times.

East Dunbartonshire
Your Local Boots Pharmacy
92 Kirkintilloch Road, Lenzie G66 4LQ
0141 776 1202
M Farren Limited
133 Main Street, Lennoxtown G66 7DB
01360 312 458
Graeme Pharmacy
33 Station Road, Milingavie G62 8PG
0141 956 1710
Lloyds Pharmacy
8 New Kirk Road, Bearsden G61 3SL
0141 942 9248
Pulse Pharmacy
10 Newdyke Road, Kirkintilloch G66 2PX
0141 564 1211

West Dunbartonshire
Boots The Chemist
98 Sylvania Way, Clydebank Shopping Centre,
Clydebank G81 2TL 0141 952 2217
Clan Chemists
3 Rockbank Place, Hardgate Cross G81 5NZ
01389 873 764
High Street Pharmacy
8 High Street, Dumbarton G82 1LL
01389 762 598
N & R Gordon Ltd
12/14 Mitchell Way, Alexandria G83 0LW
01389 752 012
Marchbanks Pharmacy
172 Main Street, Renton G82 4PE
01389 752 914
Sinclair Pharmacy
142 Duntocher Road, Duntocher G81 3NQ
0141 952 7066

Glasgow North East
Abbey Chemist
144 Trongate, Glasgow G1 5EN
0141 552 2528
ASDA Pharmacy
Monument Drive, Robroyston G33 1AD
0141 557 6210
Boots The Chemist
Block 6 Glasgow Fort Retail Park, Auchinlea Road,
Glasgow G33 5AT 0141 773 4817
Dickson Chemist
1024 Tollcross Road, Tollcross G32 8UW
0141 531 9412
Colin Fergusson Pharmacy
150 Petershill Road, Springburn G21 4AL
0141 558 7327
Kennyhill Pharmacy
408-410 Cumbernauld Road, Glasgow G31 3NN
0141 554 2165
Lloyds Pharmacy
186/188 Abercromby Street, Bridgeton G40 2RZ
0141 554 3281
Morrisons Pharmacy
Ravenswood Road, Baillieston G69 7HU
0141 771 9216

Parkhead Health Centre Pharmacy
101 Salamanca Street, Parkhead G31 5BA
0141 554 0554
Superdrug Stores Plc
Unit 4/5, Parkhead Forge, Parkhead G31 4EB
0141 554 6600

Townhead Health Centre Pharmacy
Phase 1 Royal Infirmary, Glasgow G31 2ES
0141 552 2050

Highlighted pharmacies are open 7 days a week.
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Glasgow North West

**Bannerman’s Pharmacy**
171 173 Saracen Street, Possilpark G22 5JL
0141 336 8075

**Boots The Chemist**
Unit 13 Caledonia Centre, Central Station,
Glasgow G1 25Q
0141 221 7107

**Boots The Chemist**
200 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3EN
0141 332 8405

**Cadder Pharmacy**
52 Skirsa Street, Cadder G23 5BA
0141 946 8502

**Houlihan Pharmacy Partick**
312 Dumbarton Road, Partick G11 6TF
0141 339 2349

**L G Pharmacy**
476 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G3 8XU
0141 221 3690

**Lloyds Pharmacy**
63 Kinfuans Drive, Drumchapel G15 7TG
0141 944 5724

**Lloyds Pharmacy**
263 Alderman Road, Knightswood G13 3AY
0141 959 1914

**Maryhill Pharmacy**
1129 Maryhill Road, Ruchill G20 9AZ
0141 945 1842

**Morrison’s Pharmacy**
900 Crow Road, Anniesland G13 1JD
0141 959 5689

**The Park Road Pharmacy**
405 Great Western Road, Woodlands G4 9HY
0141 339 5979

**Thistle Pharmacy**
2354 Dumbarton Road, Yoker G14 0JX
0141 959 1478

**Westray Pharmacy**
9 Westray Circus, Milton G22 7BE
0141 336 8914

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Glasgow South

**Your Local Boots Pharmacy**
155 Crown Street, Gorbals G5 9XT
0141 429 0416

**Your Local Boots Pharmacy**
220 Dalmellington Road, Crockston G53 7FY
0141 882 8877

**Catterson Pharmacy**
7-9 McArthur Street, Wellgreen G43 1RU
0141 632 1149

**Craigtoun Pharmacy**
2-4 Craigtoun Road, Govan G51 3TB
0141 445 1352

**Gilbride Chemists**
40 Paisley Road West, Kinning Park G51 1LB
0141 429 2995

**Guidi’s Pharmacy**
139 Thurston Road, Hillington G52 2AZ
0141 882 1129

**Houlihan Pharmacy Darnley**
9 10 Darnley Mains Road, Darnley G53 7RH
0141 621 2970

**Lloyds Pharmacy**
426 Carmunock Road, Croftfoot G44 5EJ
0141 637 0377

**Lloyds Pharmacy**
1851/1855 Paisley Road West,
South Cardonald G52 3SX
0141 882 1513

**J P Mackie Pharmacy**
1067 Pollokshaws Road, Shawlands G41 3YF
0141 649 8915

**Mosspark Pharmacy**
190 Mosspark Drive, Glasgow G52 1JS
0141 427 9779

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Inverclyde

**Pettigrew’s Pharmacy**
38 Cardwell Road, Gourock PA19 1UH
01475 632 028

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### Network Pharmacies Details

#### Tesco Pharmacy
- 2 Dalrymple Street, Greenock PA15 1LE
  - 01475 509 847

#### Wemyss Bay Pharmacy
- Unit 4 Shopping Centre, Ardgowan Road, Wemyss Bay PA18 6AT
  - 01475 522 995

#### David Wyse Ltd
- 12 John Wood Street, Port Glasgow PA14 5HU
  - 01475 741 035

#### North Lanarkshire

- Moodiesburn Pharmacy
  - 16 Blackwoods Crescent, Moodiesburn G69 0EN
  - 01236 879 123

#### South Lanarkshire

- Burnside Pharmacy
  - 273 Stonelaw Road, Burnside G73 3RN
  - 0141 647 6433

- Leslie Chemists
  - 222 Main Street, Cambuslang G72 7EN
  - 0141 641 3892

- Melville Chemist
  - 38 Fernhill Road, Rutherglen G73 4BT
  - 0141 634 7460

#### Renfrewshire

- Abbey Chemist
  - 27 Gauze Street, Paisley PA1 1ES
  - 0141 889 3377

- ASDA Pharmacy
  - Phoenix Retail Park, Linwood PA3 3AB
  - 0141 842 8520

- Boots The Chemist
  - Braehead Shopping Centre, Unit MSU 3, 68 Kings Inch Road, Glasgow G51 4BP
  - 0141 885 9099

- Your Local Boots Pharmacy
  - Unit 4 Clippens Road, Linwood PA3 3PU
  - 01505 327 505

- Your Local Boots Pharmacy
  - 15 Livery Walk, Bridge of Weir PA11 3NN
  - 01505 613 614

- Your Local Boots Pharmacy
  - Houston Medical Centre, Kirk Road, Houston PA6 7AR
  - 01505 614 739

- The Co-operative Pharmacy
  - 11 Broomlands Street, Paisley PA1 2LS
  - 0141 889 2576

- The Co-operative Pharmacy
  - 4 High Street, Renfrew PA4 8QR
  - 0141 866 2085

- Glenburn Pharmacy
  - 2/4 Skye Crescent, Glenburn, Paisley PA2 8EL
  - 0141 884 4842

- Andrew Hughes Chemist
  - Unit 4 Bridgewater Centre, Erskine PA8 7AA
  - 0141 812 0112

- Lloyds Pharmacy
  - 10 High Street, Paisley PA1 2BS
  - 0141 889 2304

- Lloyds Pharmacy
  - Tannahill Centre, 76 Blackstoun Road, Paisley PA3 1NT
  - 0141 849 1030

- Penmans Pharmacy
  - 5-7 William Street, Johnstone PA5 8DP
  - 01505 320 116

- East Renfrewshire

- Dr Donald R Fraser
  - 152 Main Street, Barrhead G78 1SG
  - 0141 881 1750

- Glendinning Pharmacy
  - 124 Ayr Road, Newton Mearns G77 6EG
  - 0141 638 0084

- Lloyds Pharmacy
  - 39 Eastwoodmains Road, Giffnock G46 6PW
  - 0141 638 0084

- New Life Pharmacy & Healthcare Centre
  - 665 Clarkston Road, Cathcart G44 3SE
  - 0141 637 6000

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Courier protocol

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to use couriers to transport urgently required prescriptions, medication or syringe pumps for palliative care patients in an emergency. NHS GG&C has a courier protocol to ensure that palliative care patients are able to obtain necessary supplies when required.

If you require to use the courier service, please contact your nearest network pharmacy to arrange. If you require to transfer Controlled Drugs between pharmacies, please use the Controlled Drug requisition form (see CDRF form).

The account number for the courier service is restricted to:
> pharmacies participating in the Palliative Care Network,
> the NHS GG&C Out of Hours service,
> the district nurse evening, overnight and weekend service.

Network pharmacies: please refer to your confidential courier information for area code and telephone number in section 6 of your Palliative Care Resources folder.
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CDRF FORM

You will need to use the Controlled Drug requisition form (CDRF) if you do not have a Controlled Drug item in stock and you need to obtain this urgently from another pharmacy.

Pads with CDRF forms can be ordered from Practitioner Services (click on thumbnail for a sample). A form, which can be copied, is also provided in the Palliative Care Resources folder.

The person raising the requisition (customer) must:

a. Write the Controlled Drugs to be requisitioned (including strength + quantity).
b. Sign their name in ink.
c. Write their name, GPhC reference number and address of premises that they are working out of.
d. Indicate the purpose for which the drug(s) is/are required.

The person/organisation supplying the Controlled Drug (supplier) should:

a. Provide their PSD contractor code, name of organisation, and address.
b. Ensure that the customer has completed their relevant sections with correct data.

The supplier must then submit all CD requisitions to NHS National Services Scotland, using form CD34 (as illustrated) which can be obtained from:

Practitioner Services
3 Bain Square
Livingston EH 54 7DQ
Tel: 01506 705100
Reducing dosing errors with opioid medicines

There have been a number of significant events relating to the dispensing of high dose opioids against prescriptions written by GPs. Please download this NPSA document (click on thumbnail) and make appropriate changes in your pharmacy SOP.
**Alfentanil**

Alfentanil is a potent, short-acting opioid analgesic. It is used as:

- 3rd line with specialist advice in patients unable to tolerate morphine, diamorphine or oxycodone due to persistent side effects (e.g. sedation, confusion, hallucinations, itch)
- Injectable analgesic for moderate to severe, opioid responsive pain in patients with stage 4-5 chronic kidney disease (eGFR <30ml/min), or severe acute renal impairment.

It is available in injectable form and a buccal/sublingual spray. The injection is available in two strengths 500microgram/ml 2ml amp and a high strength 5mg/ml 1ml amp. **Caution with high strength preparation as alfentanil is 10 to 20 times more potent than subcutaneous morphine.** Network Pharmacies open seven days a week, keep these preparations in stock.

The spray is formulated as a 5mg/5ml spray (1 metered dose = 140 micrograms) and is available from the Manufacturing Unit at Torbay Hospital in Devon; telephone number 01803 664707, fax number 01803 664354. Only faxed orders are accepted.

For more information see the full guideline on page 67 of NHS GG&C Palliative Care Guidelines in Section 4 in the Palliative Care Resources folder or online (click on thumbnail).

A patient information leaflet for alfentanil spray is available online (click on thumbnail).
Antacid and oxetacaine suspension is used to relieve pain on swallowing for patients undergoing radiotherapy to the head, neck or chest area. It is available from Rosemont Pharmaceuticals:

Rosemont House
Yorkdale Industrial park
Braithwaite Street
Leeds LS11 9XE

Tel: 0113 244 1400
Fax: 0113 244 1999
Email: infodesk@rosemontpharma.com
www.rosemontpharma.com

Please note if this medication is needed urgently, Rosemont Pharmaceuticals can deliver in 24 hours if ‘urgent delivery’ is requested. Invoice can then be submitted for payment of delivery charge.

For more information see the full guideline online (click on thumbnail).
Hydromorphone is a strong opioid analgesic and is usually third or fourth line choice when other opioids have not been tolerated. It is available in immediate release and modified release capsules as Palladone® and Palladone SR®. Injectable and oral solutions are available in several strengths as unlicensed products.

For more product information and order details see the full guideline online (click on thumbnail).

A patient information leaflet for oral hydromorphone can also be downloaded (click on thumbnail).
Levomepromazine

Levomepromazine 6mg is used for nausea and vomiting in palliative care. This unlicensed product (Levinan®) is stocked by network pharmacies. If the prescription is not urgent, Levinan® can be ordered as a special from Idis Ltd (www.idispharma.com), but this will take at least 48 hours.

Higher doses of levomepromazine are associated with significant levels of sedation, which may be beneficial in the management of terminal agitation or restlessness. Sedation is, however, unwelcome in the majority of patients with nausea and vomiting. With the appreciation that at low doses, levomepromazine is a potent antiemetic with a low incidence of sedation, the use of ‘low-dose’ levomepromazine has become increasingly widespread. For further information see the levomepromazine guideline online (click on thumbnail).

A patient information leaflet on levomepromazine can also be downloaded (click on thumbnail).
LORAZEPAM

If the patient is given the incorrect brand of lorazepam it is likely to be suboptimal in effect. A copy of the letter sent to all GPs in August 2011, advising them of the prescribing requirements, is included in the Palliative Care Resources folder, for information only.

Key prescribing points

- Lorazepam is used in palliative care to manage anxiety and fear which are common in patients with breathlessness. Generally, a 500microgram dose is sufficient to control the symptoms.

- Lorazepam is supplied as 1mg tablets. These tablets need to be scored in order that they can be halved to provide 500mcg dose.

- To be effective lorazepam is taken sublingually as the onset of action is considerably quicker than if swallowed.

- Not all generic brands fulfill these requirements. The Genus, PVL and TEVA brands are all blue, oblong, scored tablets and are suitable to supply for sublingual use.

- Prescriptions should state “Lorazepam sublingual 1mg.”
Recent prescribing data showed that across NHS GG&C nearly 50% of midazolam prescriptions were written for the wrong strength or ampoule size. In a recent incident a carer visited five pharmacies with a prescription for the wrong strength of midazolam before the pharmacist contacted the prescriber and rectified the situation. This is incredibly stressful and unnecessary.

Midazolam is a Schedule 3 Controlled Drug and prescriptions are frequently written incorrectly. A sample of a correctly written prescription is included in the section GP letter/CD prescription sample. You can also copy the page in the Palliative Care Resources folder and share it with your local GPs if there is a problem.

Key prescribing points

> 5mg/ml, 2ml ampoule is the only strength of midazolam used in palliative care, since more dilute strengths pose two potential problems:
  
  1. The bolus dose may be too large to give subcutaneously.
  2. The required volume may be too large to fit in a syringe pump, especially if mixed with other medicines.

> Pharmacies in the Palliative Care Network only stock one strength/amp size of midazolam injection: 5mg/ml, 2ml ampoule.

> Midazolam injection is a Schedule 3 Controlled Drug and the prescription has to be written correctly (see sample CD prescription).

> Please contact the prescriber if you receive a prescription for other strengths or ampoule sizes of midazolam for palliative care patients to confirm and discuss intention.

> District nurses may also be in a position to help clarify what is intended and help to facilitate any changes required.
**Midazolam Buccal**

Midazolam buccal is used to treat status epilepticus as an alternative to subcutaneous midazolam or rectal diazepam. It can also be used in the event of a terminal haemorrhage.

Using the buccal route means carers can administer in an emergency without having to wait for healthcare professionals to administer midazolam via parenteral route. It is available as two different preparations: Epistatus® and Buccolam®.

Buccolam® 5mg/ml is half the strength of Epistatus® and from April 2012 local formulary guidance states that for infants, toddlers, children and adolescents, Buccolam® is on the preferred list of the GG&C formulary for management of seizures in epilepsy. See Formulary News (April 2012). It should be noted however that many existing patients will already be using the alternative unlicensed preparation Epistatus® and due to the difference in strength and associated risks, any agreed change of treatment would require careful management and patient/carer counselling.

The brand Epistatus® of Midazolam buccal liquid 10mg/ml will continue to be held by three of the pharmacies participating in the Palliative Care Network – please refer to the section Palliative care drugs in network pharmacies in Chapter 2 for details of these pharmacies.

For more product information see the full guideline online (click on thumbnail).
GP letter/C D prescription sample

Incorrectly written CD prescriptions may be a common problem in your area. One of the most consistent complaints from pharmacists and a common source of delays in the supply of Controlled Drugs is GPs writing prescriptions that do not fulfill legal requirements. Please remember that you do have an ethical duty of care to the patient to act in their best interest and wherever possible please deal with this as promptly as possible.

Practice points
Prescriptions for Schedule 2 and 3 drugs can be amended by the pharmacist if the total quantity is specified in words but not figures or if it contains minor typographical errors.

When faced with an ethical dilemma regarding supply against an illegal prescription, please remember that pharmacists should be able to defend their actions and inactions. It is advisable to keep records of the decision making process.

Suggested actions
If you need a completely new prescription then you can use the courier service to uplift this from the GP surgery.

If this is a common problem in your area, please use the sample prescription, adapted from one produced by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, and the letter to work with your GPs to improve this. These can be copied from the originals in the Palliative Care Resources folder. The sample prescription can also be seen here (point, don’t click!).

If this continues to be a problem, please discuss with your CHCP Lead Clinical Pharmacist or the NHS GG&C Controlled Drugs Governance Team, who may be able to intervene to improve the situation.

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Palliative care prescribing aid

This aid for practitioners has been developed to improve writing of palliative care prescriptions. It has been distributed to GPs and District Nurses. Point here ▲ to see the reverse.
Marie Curie Hospice in Glasgow have developed an opioid conversion chart to help practitioners. Please refer to this chart if you are asked for advice from a GP or as part of your clinical check of a new prescription for one of your patients. An A4 version is contained in the Palliative Care Resources folder.

* When changing to a different opioid, it is usual to reduce the final opioid dose by one third: vigilance for opioid toxicity and provision for breakthrough pain is advised at this time. Contact palliative care team for advice.

**Opioid conversion chart**

**Divide by 2**

**Divide by 3**

**Divide by 2**

**Divide by 7.5**

**Divide by 10**

**Equivalent**

**Divide by 2**

**Divide by 2**

**Breakthrough pain**

> For same opioid and route, divide 24 hour opioid dose by 6.

> For Fentanyl, divide patch strength (microgram) by 5 to get breakthrough diamorphine SC dose (mg).
**END OF LIFE CARE**

The importance of consistently delivering high quality care in the last days and hours of life is widely recognised.

A guideline ‘Palliative Care in the last days of life’, developed by NHS Lothian, aims to aid clinical decision making and good practice in person-centred care for patients who are deteriorating and at risk of dying. Please refer to the guideline (click on thumbnail) which includes details of medicines commonly used for symptom control in the last days of life.

Work to further improve end of life care in Scotland, supported by the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland, is underway; key principles, applicable in all care settings, are included in *Interim guidance: caring for people in the last days and hours of life* (click on thumbnail).
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Just in Case

Purpose

Just in Case anticipatory prescribing is an initiative for palliative care patients approaching end of life, who often experience new or worsening symptoms that require urgent treatment. This may occur ‘out-of-hours’ which can lead to significant problems (e.g. medicine availability, treatment delay, patient or carer distress). As patients deteriorate they may be unable to take oral medication and therefore require parenteral treatment.

Living and Dying Well – A national action plan for palliative and end of life care in Scotland (2008 – click on thumbnail to see the PDF) identifies the use of Just in Case boxes as an example of good practice. These boxes should facilitate the use of anticipatory prescribing and aid the prevention of unnecessary crises and unscheduled hospital admissions. The NHS GG&C Managed Care Network for Palliative Care has recognised the potential benefit in primary care of Just in Case boxes which are included in our local delivery plan for ‘Living and Dying Well’.

What does the GP need to prescribe?

There is no definitive or exhaustive list. Think about pain relieved by your patient. Whatever you think might be needed by your patient.

How should the GP prescribe?

Write a GP10 for every item needed.

Medicines

The most likely symptoms are pain, nausea/vomiting, agitation/restlessness, respiratory secretions and breathlessness.

Pain Tailor to individual need. Seek specialist advice if the patient is on a strong opioid other than oral morphine. If the patient is receiving oral morphine or a Step 2 analgesic (including 30/500 co-codamol or equivalent) an appropriate dose of diamorphine/morphine SC should be available. If the patient is opioid naïve, then diamorphine 2mg or 3mg (as required for SC bolus use) supplied as 5 x 5mg ampoules would be appropriate.

Nausea and vomiting Tailor to individual need. If the patient is receiving an oral antiemetic and this is effective, the equivalent drug should be available for SC use. If the patient...
is not on an anti-emetic, levomepromazine 5mg (as required for SC bolus use) supplied as 10 x 25mg ampoules, may be appropriate.

**Agitation/restlessness** Occurs in about 30% of dying patients. Midazolam 2mg-5mg as required for SC use and lorazepam 500micrograms SL as required should be available. Midazolam 5mg/ml 2ml ampoules (packs of 10 ampoules) should be prescribed as other strengths are not used in palliative care.

**Respiratory secretions** Occurs in about 50% of dying patients. Hyoscine butylbromide 20mg SC as required should be available (packs of 10 ampoules).

**Dyspnoea** Tailor to individual need. Seek specialist advice if the patient is on a strong opioid other than oral morphine. If the patient is receiving oral morphine or a Step 2 analgesic (including 30/500 co-codamol or equivalent) an appropriate dose of diamorphine / morphine SC should be available. If opioid naive, diamorphine 2mg or 3mg (as required for SC bolus use) would be appropriate. If the patient is breathless and anxious, then consider the use of SL lorazepam (500 micrograms, supplied as 28 x 1mg tablets) or SC midazolam 2mg, as required.

**Water for injection 5ml ampoules** To flush cannula after a bolus dose. If water for injection has not been included on the prescription, please prompt GP to prescribe.

The GP should write an ‘as required’ prescription chart which covers anticipatory prescribing:
> medicine
> route of administration
> dose and frequency
> indication.

If documentation has been written up and not used, then this should be reviewed by the team caring for the patient at least every 7 days (and before a weekend) to ensure that it is still appropriate. Ensure that the patient and family know that if medicines need to be administered, then the OOH DN service should be contacted directly rather than NHS24.

For more information: [www.palliativecareggc.org.uk](http://www.palliativecareggc.org.uk). (Click ‘Community’, then ‘Pharmacy’ and scroll down to ‘Just in Case’.)
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NHS GG&C palliative care guidelines

We have the new NHS GG&C Guidelines (adapted from NHS Lothian) for information and as a resource. Please read as part of your CPD and share appropriate practice points with your staff. The full guideline is included in the Palliative Care Resources folder and can be seen online (click on the screen image).

NES Pharmacy also has palliative care distance learning packs available if you would like to enhance your learning.
Patient information

Macmillan resources
The ‘Macmillan resources catalogue’ and the merchandise can be ordered online at: www.be.macmillan.org.uk.

Affected by cancer?
A leaflet has been included in the Palliative Care Resources folder and can be ordered online at: www.be.macmillan.org.uk.

Support for people affected by cancer is also available from Citizens Advice (www.citizensadvice.org.uk). Link in with your District Nurses if you are concerned about how someone is coping.

Non-malignant conditions
Information and leaflets for other, non-malignant diseases, e.g. heart failure, COPD, dementia, motor neurone disease, can be found on recognised support websites.

Websites for patients and carers
Information can be found on NHS Scotland Palliative Care Guidelines.

The NHS inform website has a section on Palliative Care and provides a Support Service Directory which can be searched by keyword or postcode.

The following organisations can also provide information for carers:
- Carers Trust
- Carers Scotland
- Crossroads Caring Scotland
- Glasgow City Council Carers Services