**Opiate Substitute Therapy (OST)**

**Instalment and Supervised Self Administration (SSAM) Dispensing**

The Alcohol and Drug Recovery (ADRS) recognise the immense contribution that the community pharmacy network is making in enabling the public to access their prescribed medications and in providing support and advice during the current pandemic. We recognise that community pharmacies provide an invaluable service in providing lifesaving OST treatment to our patients. The ADRS have taken steps to reduce the impact of OST prescriptions on the pharmacy workload whilst recognising that instalment and SSAM will remain a critical element for a small number of patients.

It is recognised that during times of social disruption, alcohol and drug use in the population increases. The ADRS have undertaken an exercise to review the total caseload with a view to protecting patients by maintaining them in treatment and minimising the impact on community pharmacies. OST is a recognised treatment that protects against fatal overdose and promotes health and recovery of individuals. Access to OST has wider community benefits including reduced criminality. The role of community pharmacy in protecting the health of the individual and of the wider community should not be underestimated.

The review and risk assessment of each individual prescription started on the 19th March. Following risk assessment, new prescriptions have been produced which eliminate or dramatically reduce the need for SSAM and increase the intervals between collection of instalments. This is designed to protect patients and to minimise the impact on pharmacies. There will be inevitable delays before all new prescriptions have replaced previous ones. A PIL has been produced and distributed to patients giving details of the changes being implemented.

There will be a small number of patients for whom daily or reduced SSAM remains essential. The comprehensive risk assessment undertaken will have identified areas such as:

* child protection, where the home environment is unsuitable for increased take- home doses. This is particularly important with extended school closures.
* Adult Support and Protection issues including protection of patients who may be at risk of coercion to divert prescribed doses.
* Mental health
* Risks to the wider community from diversion of Controlled Drugs.

**Points for Pharmacy Action:**

* Any prescriptions dated before 19th March (before review) for daily SSAM can be reduced to twice weekly SSAM with immediate effect.
* Contact details, including email template and telephone, for all NHS GGC Alcohol and Drug Treatment services and the ADRS Pharmacy team attached.
* Communication with and from ADRS is essential. ADRS have been provided with pharmacy contact details
* ADRS staff will be in regular contact with pharmacies to collect and deliver prescriptions. Please allow staff to bypass any queues and to discuss with them agreed use of back doors or delivery points if possible, to minimise risks when transporting CDs. All ADRS will carry authorised identification.
* Patients have been advised of the requirement for social distancing whilst waiting and on receipt of their prescription. Copies of the PIL will be available for further distribution in pharmacies.
* Doses should be placed in a disposable cup and placed on a counter. Pharmacy staff should step back and then the patient advised to step forward and consume the dose and put empty cup directly into disposal bin. Staff should use gloves when sealing and disposing of plastic bags.
* Take home doses should always be supplied in individual bottles. Patients cannot accurately measure daily doses from large multidose containers. This is particularly important as previous work has identified that household items including baby feeding bottles with graduations have been used in attempts to measure daily doses if individual doses are not provided. Services can provide safe storage containers when large quantities of take home are dispensed however large bottles do not fit the safe storage boxes.
* All Government COVID 19 protection processes should be followed <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>
* Contact any member of the ADRS Pharmacy team for advice.

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**Links for further background information:**

<http://www.sdf.org.uk/> <https://www.release.org.uk/>