

## 7-day prescriptions

The treatment length of a prescription determines how often a patient receives their medication. It does not determine how the medicines are dispensed.

7-day prescriptions are for patients who need their medicine supplying weekly for clinical and safety reasons.

*Important: Changes to existing patients' prescription length should only be implemented after a careful risk and impact assessment and communication between the prescriber and community pharmacist. This will help prevent unintended changes to patients' care such as the withdrawal of the supply of medicines in a multiple-compartment compliance aid (MCA). A collaborative approach, with open communication, between professionals is recommended.*

### When are 7-Day Prescriptions Appropriate?

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
- Need medication supplied weekly
- Are prescribed medications with stability issues when supplied in an MCA\*
- Have a documented need (as determined by the prescriber)

\* The stability of some drugs is affected once removed from their original packaging and they require a 7-day prescription when the drug is to be dispensed into a compliance aid. Some drugs are not suitable for dispensing in compliance aids at all. The Specialist Pharmacy Service Medicines Compliance Aid database includes drug stability in compliance aid information - <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/usage-of-medicines-in-compliance-aids/>

### When are 7-Day Prescriptions NOT Appropriate?

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

- when the patient is resident in a care home or has a domiciliary care worker
- to support the provision of an MCA for patient or carer convenience

### Points to note:

- The decision to make an adjustment, including the supply of an MCA, is that of the community pharmacy, not the prescriber, patient, carer or care organisation.
- It is not part of the community pharmacy NHS Terms of Service to provide medication in an MCA, even if this is requested by a prescriber.
- Community pharmacists, like all NHS service providers, are required to make “reasonable adjustments” to support patients with a disability to access their services. It is for them to decide if a patient meets the requirements for support and what that “reasonable adjustment” is.
- Community pharmacies are not paid any additional fees for dispensing into, or supplying, an MCA.

- MCAs are not the only intervention to support patients with their medicines and the pharmacist may suggest alternative reasonable adjustments to meet the patient's need e.g. reminder charts or easy open containers.
- If the community pharmacist has assessed the patient and determines an MCA is not an appropriate adjustment, but the prescriber still wishes it, then an alternative funding mechanism would be required to support provision of an MCA.
- The most appropriate duration of supply is a clinical decision for the prescriber.
- 28-day prescriptions are appropriate for the majority of patients who are stable and for whom there are no safety concerns.
- If 7-day prescriptions (or shorter) are considered a clinical requirement by the prescriber, they should be supplied weekly (or the prescribed interval) to the patient by the community pharmacy.
- Community pharmacies are unable to make changes to MCAs once they have been issued to a patient. If medication changes are made part way through a prescription cycle and the medication is required within the MCA, the entire prescription for all medication within the compliance aid will need to be reissued and re-dispensed.
- Where a prescription for 28 days is issued and the patient receives their medicine in an MCA the patient will receive 28 days of medication in one supply, i.e. 4 x 7 day MCAs in a single supply (or 1 x 28 day PilPouch or similar system, where used by the pharmacy).
- Community Pharmacies are not able to dispense in instalments on an FP10 prescription.
- Dispensing into an MCA significantly increases the workload for the community pharmacy.
- 7-day prescriptions have the potential to increase workload for GP practices, which may be mitigated when electronic prescribing is undertaken via the Repeat Dispensing mechanism.