

# Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

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Issue: 92

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023

## Palliative care specialist prescribing in a community setting

This bulletin provides an update on changes to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight (HIOW) formulary, the community pharmacy locally commissioned service for palliative care and authorisation charts for continuous subcutaneous infusion (CSCI) and PRN drugs in the home.

Increasingly patients' treatment escalation plans emphasise being at home, with community nursing teams delivering their care. This provides challenges to medicines accessibility and delivery systems already in place. Currently there is no ability for secondary care to provide prescriptions to community pharmacists via the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) system.

There are a number of developments underway locally to enable specialists to access the national EPS service in the future. The HIOW Prescribing Committee will monitor the implementation of EPS within providers.

### 1. HIOW Formulary update- new “purple” category

HIOW Prescribing Committee has liaised with stakeholders to ensure that systems can be in place to allow patients and their care teams access to medications which have historically been prescribed in secondary care settings, in their own homes. This is to avoid unnecessary and inappropriate patient transfer to alternative care settings.

This necessitated a new category of medication to be added to the HIOW formulary.

The new Purple RAG rating is for the following palliative care medicines which may be prescribed in a community setting:

- Parecoxib solution for injection, 40g powder
- Phenobarbital solution for injection ampoules 200mg in 1ml
- Sodium valproate powder injection vials, 400mg
- Clonidine injection 150mcg/1ml
- Fentanyl ampoules 100mg/2ml
- Ketamine injection 200mg/20ml
- Levetiracetam injection 500mg/5ml
- Alfentanil injection 5mg/1ml
- Methadone ampoules for injection 10mg/1ml

These can be viewed in chapter 21 of the formulary [LINK](#):

All other medicines for palliative care indications will remain the same RAG rating.

Medicines listed in this chapter with a PURPLE rating would usually be prescribed by specialists in secondary care settings. These medications, which may be unfamiliar to GPs, may be prescribed in exceptional circumstances (as listed below) under the direct supervision of palliative care specialists.

- GPs may agree to prescribe these medicines for emergency, short-term symptom relief for patients in the final days of life receiving palliative care in a community setting on the direct advice of a palliative care specialist.
- GP prescribing should not continue for longer than 1 week without a face-to-face specialist palliative care review.
- Specialists to provide support and advice and will be responsible for monitoring, dose adjustments etc.
- GPs may decline to accept prescribing responsibility at their professional discretion.

Specialist advice will be in line with the local palliative care guidelines available:

- Hampshire and Isle of Wight: Wessex Palliative Physicians Palliative Care Handbook 9th edition 2019 [LINK](#)
- Isle of Wight only: Mountbatten Isle of Wight Palliative Care Symptom Control Guidelines [LINK](#)

## 2. Community pharmacy locally commissioned service

We are pleased to announce that we have a new community pharmacy locally commissioned service (LCS) for on demand availability of palliative care drugs across Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB. The new LCS replaces the different agreements previously in place resulting in one ICB wide agreement and a single drug list of medicines that are held by the community pharmacy as part of the service. The service will reduce variation and ensure consistency in the care received by the patients during end of life (EOL) care.

Aim of the service:

- To improve access for patients and their carers to emergency palliative care medication when required by ensuring prompt access and continuity of supply.
- To provide the best level of EOL care and reduce inappropriate hospital admissions in the last weeks of life.
- To support people, carers, and clinicians by providing them with up-to-date information and advice, and referral where appropriate

The new palliative care medication list and the locations of the nominated pharmacies may be obtained via your local medicines optimisation team. [LINK](#) For obvious reasons these details are not hosted on websites and should not be published on public facing websites or notices.

Please share the new list of pharmacies with relevant team members, once obtained.

Your usual pharmacy route for palliative care medications will continue. However, it is the pharmacies that have been specifically commissioned for on demand availability of drugs for palliative care that may have changed in your area. These are the pharmacies commissioned to always stock the pre-agreed palliative care medications and may be relied upon when your usual pharmacies do not have the items required.

Please check the revised pharmacy lists prior to the point of urgent need.

### 3. Authorisation charts for EOL medicines (PRN and CSCI)

A new version of the CSCI and PRN charts were distributed in 2022 to Hampshire Portsmouth and Southampton. The Isle of Wight remains the same. The chart is accessed via the SystmOne palliative primary care launch screen.

Please check your EMIS or SystmOne record system. If these do not default to the August 2022 or later dated version by January 2024, please contact Dr PJ Morey (contact details below).

Community nursing teams may be managing a rapidly changing clinical situation. Therefore, the date/time stamp is essential. In some cases, there may be multiple prescribers creating charts and therefore the practitioner signing is responsible for the content. The nurses need to check they have the latest form. In some circumstances it might be appropriate for the palliative care team to issue a chart, separately from the prescription for supply. This is within the terms of the formulary category.

Please contact your local service or the duty service, if out of hours, to agree the procedure on a case-by-case basis.

Dr P-J Morey: use [palliativecare@southernhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:palliativecare@southernhealth.nhs.uk) (will change in April 2024)

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On behalf of Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB Medicines Optimisation Teams

Local medicines optimisation teams can be contacted via their generic team mailbox: See [LINK](#)

*Previous bulletins can be found hosted on the ICS website here: [link](#)*