

7 Day Prescriptions Guidance

This guide has been created to assist pharmacy teams in deciding which of your patients may require 7-day prescriptions and will help you in discussions with GPs regarding those patients and any proposed changes to current provisions of 7-day prescriptions for patients.

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 and 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.
- Are prescribed medications with stability issues when supplied in an MCA*.
- Where agreed by both the GP and pharmacist to support the provision of MCA for patients.

* The stability of some drugs is affected once removed from their original packaging and 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. The Specialist Pharmacy Service [Medicines Compliance Aid database](#) includes drug stability in compliance aid information.

For additional information regarding how to respond to proposed changes to the provision of 7-day prescriptions, please see [MCA Briefing – March 2024](#).

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 into 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 pharmacy contractors can consider several factors when determining what is a reasonable adjustment, including financial and practical issues. See the [Community Pharmacy England equality act briefing](#) for more guidance.
- Community pharmacies are not paid any additional fees for dispensing into, or supplying, an MCA despite it significantly increasing workload.
- MCAs are not the only intervention to support patients with their medicines, and the pharmacist may suggest alternative adjustments to meet the patients need. E.g. reminder charts, easy open containers.
- If the community pharmacist has assessed the patient and determines an MCA is not an appropriate adjustment but the prescriber or a patient still wishes it, then **the pharmacy may choose to charge for the provision of the MCA.**
- The most appropriate duration of supply on a prescription 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 re issued 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 medication in one supply, i.e. 4x7 weekly MCA in a single supply.
- Community pharmacies cannot dispense in instalments on an FP10 prescription.