



Waythrough



Newsletter for community pharmacies providing substance use services

March 2026

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Improving Information Supplied with Gabapentinoids (Pregabalin/Gabapentin), Benzodiazepines and Z-Drugs

The MHRA has reviewed the warnings regarding addiction, dependence, withdrawal, and tolerance for gabapentin, pregabalin, benzodiazepines, and z-drugs. The findings (detailed in the Public Assessment Report) were that it was necessary to strengthen these warnings in the product information and on packaging to better inform healthcare professionals and patients of these known risks.

Resources for prescribers and dispensers

The Agency has developed additional patient resources for [benzodiazepines](#), [gabapentinoids](#) and [z-drugs](#) on the risks of addiction, dependence, withdrawal and tolerance which should be provided to patients when these medicines are prescribed. This advice for patients and their families/ carers was developed following consultation with a number of stakeholder organisations, charities and the CHM/ relevant expert advisory groups. We encourage healthcare professionals to use this information alongside the statutory patient information leaflet supplied with these medicines.



Please scan this QR code to read the Gov.uk Drug Safety Update:

Medicine Supply Notification

Subutex® and Suboxone® discontinuation. Pharmacy teams should be aware that all strengths of Subutex® and Suboxone® tablets have been discontinued.

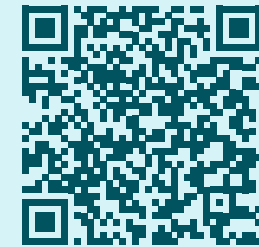
The manufacturer, Indivior, is no longer supplying these products in the UK therefore, they are no longer available for community pharmacies to order. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has issued a medicine supply notification for:

- Buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone®) 2mg/500microgram and 8mg/2mg sublingual tablets (MSN/2026/002)
- Subutex 0.4mg/2mg/8mg sublingual tablets (Indivior UK Ltd)

For more information follow this QR code, which will take you to Community Pharmacy England website.

Alternatives

Alternative branded and generic buprenorphine sublingual tablets remain available.



Good practice/ feedback

Thanks to Waythrough colleagues, who shared feedback and insights on working with community pharmacies in their area.

Here are just a few of the heartwarming messages. Please feel free to share examples how you support people affected by substance use. Please share by sending the email to:

barbara.zub@waythrough.org.uk

Pharmacy colleagues would make a direct contact with regarding a vulnerable person i.e - they would advise on presentation and also missed dose (not wait until 3 and off script would notify straightaway).

This would prevent person going off script and help safeguard our people. I can't thank them enough, as this led to supporting a person and also initiating urgent welfare visits when needed, and as identified by them.

Very friendly, always call when the person is off script, the person enjoys going to their pharmacy. Pharmacy colleagues get to know our people well, are kind and welcoming. Overall, a pleasure to work with.

Did you know?

Prescription validity following hospital admission: Guidance for Community Pharmacies and Substance Use Services

Key Takeaways

- Hospital admission and missed doses do not automatically invalidate a prescription
- Prescriptions for Schedule 2 and 3 Controlled Drugs remain valid if they are within the legal dispensing timeframe (typically 28 days) and have not been cancelled
- Pharmacists remain professionally accountable for ensuring supply is clinically appropriate at the point of dispensing
- Where several days have been missed, it is reasonable and appropriate to seek clinical reassurance before restarting at the original dose
- Confirmation from the substance use service following reassessment provides sufficient assurance to continue supply
- Timely communication between hospitals, services, and community pharmacies is essential to ensure safe and consistent patient care
- If in doubt, contact the substance use service before dispensing

Background

People we support receiving Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST) or other controlled drugs may occasionally miss several days of prescribed doses due to hospital admission. This can create uncertainty for community pharmacies around the legality and clinical appropriateness of resuming supply once the patient presents post-discharge.

This article aims to clarify key principles and highlight the importance of effective communication between services and pharmacies to support safe and consistent practice.

Legal Validity of Prescriptions

A prescription for a Controlled Drug (CD) remains legally valid provided that:

It is within the statutory timeframe for dispensing

Typically 28 days for Schedule 2 and 3 CD

It has not been cancelled or amended

It meets all legal requirements for a CD prescription

Importantly, hospital admission and missed doses alone do not invalidate a prescription.

Did you know?

Prescription validity following hospital admission: Guidance for Community Pharmacies and Substance Use Services

Professional and clinical accountability

While a prescription may remain legally valid, Pharmacists remain professionally accountable for ensuring that any supply of a CD is:

- Legally compliant, and
- Clinically appropriate for the patient at the point of supply

Where a patient has missed a significant number of days, it is entirely reasonable—and good practice—for a Pharmacist to seek reassurance that:

- Restarting the medication at the original dose is safe, and
- The prescription remains clinically appropriate

Scan this QR code to visit the Community Pharmacy England website page on Dispensing Controlled Drugs information.



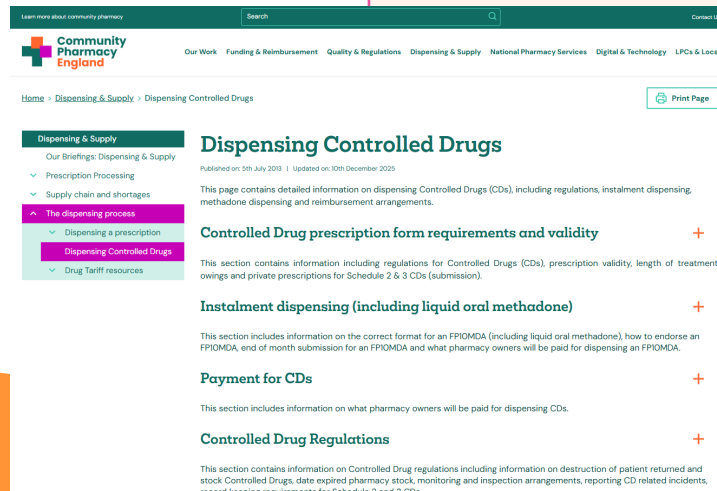
Role of reassessment by substance use services

In the scenario described:

- The substance use service has reassessed the patient post-discharge
- The service has confirmed that resumption of the prescription is clinically appropriate

This reassessment should provide sufficient assurance for the community Pharmacist to continue dispensing, assuming the prescription remains legally valid.

If you have been notified that a person using our service has been admitted to hospital, notify their pharmacy right away, asking them to put a hold on the prescription until further notice.



Did you know?

Prescription validity following hospital admission: Guidance for Community Pharmacies and Substance Use Services

Current guidance and the need for consistency

At present, there is no definitive national guidance from the RPS, DHSC, or OHID that specifically addresses this scenario. As a result:

Practice may vary between pharmacies and services

Inconsistencies can arise, particularly following hospital admissions.

This issue has been raised with Lead Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer for NHS England and will be raised with national colleagues to explore whether further clarification or guidance is needed to support consistent practice across community pharmacies and substance misuse services.

The importance of communication

Effective communication between hospitals, substance misuse services, and community pharmacies is crucial, particularly given:

Variability in hospital admission and discharge pathways

Delays or gaps in discharge information reaching services and pharmacies.

Services engagement with local partners should be in place to highlight the importance of collaborative working in these situations

What we ask of Community Pharmacies

If a patient receiving OST:

Presents to the pharmacy after missing multiple days of collection, and

The pharmacy has not yet received confirmation from the service

We kindly ask pharmacies to **contact the substance use service** to confirm whether further dispensing is safe and appropriate.

If a person using our service has missed 3 or more days, and you have not received confirmation of their hospitalisation etc. please do not void the prescription assuming they have fallen off script. Contact your local service to notify them of the missed doses and await for further confirmation regarding continuation on this prescription.

Contact details are listed in each service section for a reference.

References:

The Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001.

Community Pharmacy England, Dispensing Controlled Drugs website.

RPS Professional guidance on the safe and secure handling of medicines.

Email correspondence with Lead Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer for NHSE England, October 2025

Service updates



Contact Details

Tel: **01226 779066**

5-6 Burleigh Ct, Burleigh St, Barnsley S70 1XY

Satellite Hub: Dearne Enterprise Centre, 1 Bamburgh Lane, Goldthorpe, S63 9PG

Satellite Hub: McLintocks Building, Crookes Street, Barnsley S70 6BX

Local Update

Substance use educational event for community pharmacies in Barnsley update

Many thanks to all our pharmacy colleagues who took part in the educational events for community pharmacies. We really appreciate your engagement and participation. For those who were unable to attend the live webinar sessions, a recorded session will be shared along with supporting references. Please keep an eye on our communication channels ((PharmOutcomes, CPSY, email) and our website for details on how to access the recording: <https://barnsleyrecoverysteps.org.uk/professionals/>

Important update: Changes to Service Level Agreements (SLA)

From 01of February 2026. Significant changes have been introduced to our Service Level Agreements (SLA). Please keep an eye on our official communication channels (PharmOutcomes, CPSY, email) for detailed information and next steps.

Naloxone research update

A heartfelt thank you to all our partners who are taking part in the research project, which wraps up at the end of February 2026. Your time, insights, and collaboration are truly valued. Please keep an eye out for further updates, where we'll be sharing next steps and what's coming next.



Service updates



Contact Details
Tel: **08000 14 14 80**
5 The Applegarth, Northallerton, DL7 8NT



Contact Details
Tel: **03000 266 666**
81 – 88 Whinney Hill, Durham, DH1 3BQ



Contact Details
Tel: **01422 415550**
Basement House, 10 Carlton St, Halifax HX1 2AL

Alternatively if a pharmacy is struggling to get through the could email our dispensing team
pharmacy@calderdalerecoverysteps.org.uk

Working together for better patient care

Maintaining strong links with community pharmacies is essential to delivering joined-up, patient-centred care, particularly for individuals affected by substance use. Community Pharmacies are often the most accessible point of healthcare and play a vital role in harm reduction, supervised consumption, and ongoing medicines support.

By actively supporting pre-registration pharmacists across a range of services, we can offer valuable opportunities for them to gain first-hand experience within substance use services. This exposure helps Build clinical confidence, deepen understanding of complex patient needs, and strengthen skills in working collaboratively within multidisciplinary teams.

Strengthening these partnerships not only supports the training and professional development of future pharmacists but also improves continuity of care and outcomes for some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

If you would like to have insight into support we offer to our people- stay in touch! Thank you for those, who already have:

"Thank you very much for allowing me to shadow you team at the Calderdale Recovery Steps.

As a trainee pharmacist, gaining insight into the recovery process and seeing the multidisciplinary support you provide was incredibly valuable. I particularly appreciated shadowing clinician in the morning clinics, as it gave me a much clearer perspective on the unique challenges and triumphs in addiction recovery."

Service updates



Contact Details
Tel: **07394 563555**
Armley Court 3 Armley Court Armley Road LS12 2LB

Tel: **07394 563556**
Kirkgate 74 Kirkgate, Leeds LS2 7DJ

Tel: **07974 429844**
Irford House Seacroft Crescent, Leeds LS14 6PA

Local Update

Naloxone research update

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Contact Details
Tel: **0191 917 1160**
Unit 19, Cookson House, B1344, South Shields
NE33 1TL



Contact Details
Tel: **01946 350020**
21b Lowther St, Whitehaven CA28 7DG
1st Floor Stocklund House, Castle Street,
Carlisle CA3 8SY
92-96 Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness,
Cumbria LA14 1RD
6 Finkle Street, Workington, Cumbria CA14 2AY

Service updates



Contact Details
Tel: **0800 233 5444**

Exeter, East & Mid Devon
Magdalene House, Grendon Road, Exeter, EX1 2NJ

South Devon

Templer House, Scott Close, Newton Abbot, TQ12 1GJ

North Devon

Riverside Court, Units 3, 4 & 6, Castle St, Barnstaple, EX31 1DR

Longbridge House, Bideford Medical Centre Abbotsham Road,
Bideford, Devon, EX39 3AF



Contact Details
Tel: **01274 296023**
10 Curren St, Bradford BD1 5BA
info@newvisionbradford.org.uk

Local Update

Marketing resources New Vision Bradford

If you would like any marketing resources for the service, including posters or information leaflets for New Vision Bradford, please get in touch via the contact email: abi.fox@newvisionbradford.org.uk



Contact Details
Tel: **0114 321 4652**

Portland House, 243 Shalesmoor, Moorfields,
Sheffield S3 8UG

Local Update

Substance use educational event for community pharmacies in Sheffield update

Many thanks to all our pharmacy colleagues who took part in the educational events for community pharmacies. We really appreciate your engagement and participation. For those who were unable to attend the live webinar sessions, a recorded session will be shared along with supporting references.

Please keep an eye on our communication channels (PharmOutcomes, CPSY, email) and our website for details on how to access the recording:



Contact Details
Tel: **020 8800 6999**

590 Seven Sisters Rd, London N15 6HR



Scan the QR code
to visit our website



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