



Newsletter for community pharmacies providing substance use services

November 2025



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Supplies of methadone and patient information leaflets (PILs)

In August 2025, the GPhC's Chief Pharmacy Officer, Roz Gittins, wrote to pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy owners to raise awareness of some emerging issues.

One of the matters listed was supplies of methadone and patient information leaflets (PILs).

Methadone solution when used for this indication is typically dispensed into bottles which are not the manufacturers' original packaging. We understand that people who are prescribed methadone may not want written information with each dose supplied, so we expect professional judgement to be used, taking into account the persons' individual needs, when deciding on what information to provide and when.

Pharmacies should review how information about medication (especially methadone solution) is supplied when not in the manufacturers' original packaging. This includes what conversations/written information, (including PILs) are provided and how this is documented, especially when someone starts on treatment, or their treatment or brand changes, or their pharmacy has changed.

Briefing on visual acuity risks in children prenatally exposed to methadone

An article published in July 2023 through the Royal College of Ophthalmologists (Hamilton et al, 2023) outlined that **children born to methadone-maintained opioid dependent (MMOD) mothers are almost twice as likely as unexposed peers to have significant visual abnormalities at primary school age.**

Ethypharm have amended their Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) for methadone to reflect this also.

As detailed above, the GPhC, have requested that people receiving oral methadone solution should receive a PIL to inform them of their medication.

People receiving prescriptions from methadone will have had conversations relating to this from Waythrough services if relevant to the person. **As with the advice from the GPhC, pharmacies should review how information on medicines is disseminated to people.**



Supplying methadone oral solution in separate bottles

It is best practice to ensure that individual bottles are supplied when dispensing methadone oral solution 1mg/1ml.

The payment of this Packaged Dose or PD fee is based on the contactor's endorsement whether or not the "separate containers" are requested by the prescriber or not. A PD fee(s) may also be claimed on an FP10 (green) prescription and via EPS if the pharmacy system has this functionality.

For further details please refer to FP10-MDA-Factsheet (access the factsheet by scanning this QR code).



Waythrough services instruct this on our prescriptions currently and we would ask pharmacists to provide methadone oral solution 1mg/1ml in separate bottles.

If this creates problems with CD storage, particularly if an instruction is present on the prescription, then please discuss this with the prescriber and the person prescribed methadone oral solution 1mg/1ml.

Reference: Community pharmacy: delivering substance misuse services, Published 24 January 2024.

Good practice/ feedback

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

Absolutely lovely pharmacist, who really cares about his patients. The pharmacist called re a client's concerning presentation, which alerted us to require a medical assessment. Had good insight to client's usual presentation which caused him to worry and pass on concern.

Exceptional staff that go above and beyond, catered to ours and clients needs by offering us their private consultation room to complete an ASC urgent assessment due to a client we were really concerned about.

Very friendly, always call when client is off script, clients like them, get to know the clients well, are kind and welcoming. Overall, a pleasure to work with.

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

Did you know?

How to deal with a person's representative collecting Opioid Substitution Treatment?

Should the dose be supervised?

Yes – Supervised Consumption service

- If the prescription states a dose is to be supervised the medication must not be given to a representative unless this is confirmed as appropriate by a local Waythrough substance use service prescriber or their representative acting on the instruction of the prescriber in the substance use service
- A separate letter should be obtained each time the person sends a representative to collect, and the representative should bring ID
- If an attempt is made for a representative to collect medication for a supervised dose, please contact your local Waythrough service immediately, since supervision will not be possible
- If the Waythrough prescriber agrees to the dose being collected this should be clearly recorded on the prescription and Patient Medication Record (PMR)
- It is legally acceptable to confirm verbally with the prescriber that they are happy with this arrangement since supervision, while important, is not a legal requirement under the 2001 Regulations

cont overleaf...

No – Take Home Doses

- If a person we support wants a representative to collect a dispensed Controlled Drug on their behalf, pharmacists are advised to first obtain a letter from the person that authorises and names the representative
- A separate letter should be obtained each time the person sends a representative to collect, and the representative should bring ID.
 - The pharmacist must be satisfied that the letter is genuine
- It is good practice to insist on seeing the person we support in person at least once a week unless this is known not to be possible as advised by your local Waythrough substance use service
 - If the person is not seen on at least a weekly basis this should be discussed with the local Waythrough substance use service prescriber or the prescribers' representative. A local agreement (documented verbal or written) may be introduced in these cases which outlines the responsibilities of the person, pharmacy and the local Waythrough substance use service
- The record of supply in the Controlled Drug register for schedule 2 drugs should include details of the representative collecting the CD
- The decision whether to supply or not is also at the discretion of the supplying pharmacist and based on their professional judgement

cont overleaf...

Did you know?

How to deal with a person’s representative collecting Opioid Substitution Treatment?

Should the dose be supervised?

Yes – Supervised Consumption service cont...

If the local Waythrough substance use service is closed and the prescriber cannot be contacted the pharmacist should use their professional judgement. The pharmacist should take a person-centred approach based on the individual scenario. Some things that should be considered include:

- The reasons a person cannot collect the dose themselves
- Whether they are happy the representative and request is genuine
- The risk for the person if the dose was not supplied

If a supply is made in this situation the pharmacist should inform the prescriber on the next working day

Police Custody:

For those detained in police custody, who should supply a letter of authorisation to a police custody officer to present to the pharmacist.

It would not be necessary to contact the prescriber if the person has been detained in police custody and the representative collecting the dose is a police custody officer or a custody healthcare professional. The administration of any Schedule 2 or 3 CD will be supervised by a healthcare professional. The pharmacist should consider annotating the prescription and patient medication records to advise others that the dose has not been supervised in the pharmacy.

No – Take Home Doses cont...

Person collecting	Action	Notes
Person we support or person’s representative	Pharmacist may request evidence of that person’s identity, unless already known to the pharmacist	The decision whether to supply or not is at the discretion of the supplying pharmacist – based on their professional judgement
Healthcare professional acting in their professional capacity on behalf of the person	Unless already known to the pharmacist, obtain: Name of healthcare professional Address of healthcare professional	‘Healthcare professional’ refers to any person authorised to collect a Schedule 2CD on behalf of the person named on the prescription, who is operating under a contract of employment in a health or social care occupation (e.g. a doctor, nurse or care worker)

Table 1: Adapted from Medicines, Ethics and Practice.

Police custody:

For those detained in police custody, who should supply a letter of authorisation to a police custody officer to present to the pharmacist.

Did you know?

How to deal with a person's representative collecting Opioid Substitution Treatment?

Should the dose be supervised?

PRACTICE ISSUES

It is good practice for the person collecting a Schedule 2 or 3 CD to sign the space on the reverse of the prescription form that is specifically for this purpose.

A supply can be made if this is not signed, subject to the professional judgement of the pharmacist. Instalment prescriptions only need to be signed once. A representative, including a delivery driver, can sign on behalf of a patient.

However, a robust audit trail should be available to confirm successful delivery of the medicine to the patient.

This document provides only guidance for pharmacies.

Pharmacies should always refer to their own SOPs when managing incidents in their pharmacies.

References:

Royal Pharmaceutical Society: Medicines, Ethics and Practice.

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: McIntocks Building, Crookes
Street, Barnsley S70 6BX

Local Update

Many thanks to all pharmacy colleagues, who took part in events organised by Recovery Steps Barnsley due to International Overdose Awareness Day (31 of August 2025). **Your support in keeping our people safe is paramount to the continued success of the service**



Contact Details

Tel: **01274 296023**

10 Currer St, Bradford BD1 5BA
info@newvisionbradford.org.uk



Contact Details

Tel: **0191 917 1160**

Unit 19, Cookson House, B1344, South Shields
NE33 1TL



Contact Details

Tel: **020 8800 6999**

590 Seven Sisters Rd, London N15 6HR

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

Many thanks to all pharmacy colleagues, who took part in events organised by Forward Leeds due to International Overdose Awareness Day (31 of August 2025). Your support in keeping our people safe is paramount to the continued success of the service.



Contact Details

Tel: **01422 415550**

Basement House, 10 Carlton St, Halifax HX1 2AL

Alternatively if a pharmacy is struggling to get through they could email our dispensing team

pharmacy@calderdalerecoverysteps.org.uk



Contact Details

Tel: **03000 266 666**

81 – 88 Whinney Hill, Durham, DH1 3BQ



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

Local Update

A special bulletin for pharmacy teams providing services in the Devon area was published in August 2025 as an addition to our national newsletter.

Please scan the QR code below to read the bulletin.



Contact Details
Tel: **0114 321 4652**

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

Local Update

Many thanks to all pharmacy colleagues, who took part in Open Days events to **celebrate two years of Likewise Sheffield**, a service provided by Waythrough.

2 & 3 missed Opioid Substitution Treatment doses should be reported to Likewise Sheffield.

Please scan the QR code to see the poster with necessary information, which will support your pharmacy in understanding why, what and how to report missed doses and any other concerns.



Contact Details
Tel: **08000 14 14 80**

5 The Applegarth, Northallerton, DL7 8NT



Scan the QR code
to visit our website



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