

CARE HOME MEDICINE PROCESSES AND WASTE REDUCTION AUDIT – IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW RETURNS PROCEDURE GENERAL INFORMATION

Background

It is widely acknowledged that care homes are large producers of waste medication. A number of NHS Boards have already successfully introduced a medicines waste return procedure that has resulted in a significant reduction in the volume of waste returned.

The procedure makes clear the circumstances under which it is appropriate for a care home to return waste medication to the community pharmacy. It is known as the 3Ds procedure as medicines can only be returned when:

- Medicine is **discontinued**
- Medicine reaches its expiry **date**
- Resident is **deceased**

It is unacceptable for care homes to return medicines supplied in original packs which a patient is currently prescribed/taking unless it has reached its expiry date. The same applies to creams, ointments, inhalers etc. This advice is the current guidance issued by The Care Inspectorate.

Procedure aims

The procedure aims to:

- To reduce the volume and associated costs of inappropriate medicine waste being returned to community pharmacies.
- To provide support to care home staff around medicine processes that could contribute to waste.
- To reduce the amount of time that both the care home and the community pharmacy spend processing waste medication
- To reduce workload involved with generating unnecessary prescriptions in GP practices

Outline

Details of the new procedure were presented, discussed and approved for introduction in NHS Borders by:

Community Pharmacy Borders (Contractors Committee)

Care Home Seminar Group

The Care Inspectorate

Documentation was developed based on paperwork from NHS Lothian and Tayside.

Care homes were informed about the introduction of the new procedure through attendance at the Care Home Seminar followed up with an explanatory letter.

Community Pharmacies were emailed with details of the new procedure followed by telephone support to the whole pharmacy team.

Timescales

Implementation of the new procedure from 01 October 2019 will be at the next cycle of medication.

Details of the procedure

Care homes must complete a "care homes medication return form" each time waste medicines are collected by community pharmacy.

Returns will only include:

- Medication that has been stopped by the clinician
- Medication date expired
- Medication from deceased patients

The medications must be fully documented on the returns sheet for each patient with a valid reason.

Medication returns must be checked and signed for by the care home manager or deputy.

Food supplements, non-medicated dressings and appliances such as catheters or stoma bags can be disposed of in the general waste providing all patients identifying material, i.e. dispensing label has been removed.

Community pharmacy drivers will only accept returns that are accompanied by a signed form.

Monitoring and evaluation

The success of this procedure has already been well demonstrated so minimal monitoring will take place.

Community pharmacies making a claim for pharmaceutical services to care homes will have to declare that all pharmacy team members are trained in the procedures for returns of medicines waste to community pharmacy.

Feedback will be collected from community pharmacy drivers and other team members.

References

Medicines waste in care homes. Care Inspectorate. Available at:

<http://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/guidance/9-professional/4752-medicine-waste-in-care-homes> (accessed 17 September 2019)

Managing Medicines in Care Homes. 2014. NICE. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/sc1> (accessed 17 September 2019)

Putting residents at the centre of pharmacy care home services. 2019. Royal Pharmaceutical Society Scotland. <https://www.rpharms.com/recognition/all-our-campaigns/policy-a-z/care-homes> (accessed 17 September 2019)