

Registered Pharmacies

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Dear Colleague,

Supply of Controlled Drugs Via the Community Pharmacy Emergency Supply During a Pandemic Service

The Community Pharmacy Emergency Supply during a Pandemic Service was introduced in April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This service is underpinned by the powers conferred by Regulation 226 of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1916/regulation/226/made>, which enables the emergency supply of prescription only medications by a person lawfully conducting a retail pharmacy business if the following conditions A and B are met;

- Condition A is that the supply is made whilst a disease is, or in anticipation of a disease being imminently, -
 - (a) pandemic; and
 - (b) a serious risk, or potentially a serious risk, to human health.
- Condition B is that the pharmacist by or under whose supervision the prescription only medicine is to be sold or supplied is satisfied
 - (a) that treatment with the prescription only medicine has on a previous occasion been prescribed by a relevant prescriber for the person to be treated with it; and
 - (b) as to the dose which in the circumstances it would be appropriate for that person to take.

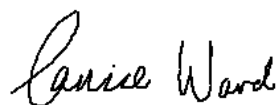
Controlled drugs in Schedules 2, 3, and 4 Part 1 **cannot** currently be supplied using the powers conferred by Regulation 226 as advised in the service specification and in correspondence issued by the Medicines Regulatory Group (MRG) on 1st May 2020.^{1,2}

The MRG and the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) are aware of a number of occasions where there have been supplies of controlled drugs via the Community Pharmacy Emergency Supply During a Pandemic Service. A common theme in these incidents has been a lack of familiarity or consideration for the Scheduling of the drug, or drugs, being supplied.

A table, produced by the HSCB in conjunction with the MRG, detailing some commonly prescribed controlled drugs and their legal schedule is attached. It can be used as an aide-mémoire when supplies made via the Community Pharmacy Emergency Supply During a Pandemic Service are being considered. It would be expected that any pharmacist providing the service should be familiar with the service specification and limitations as to what can be supplied.

It should be noted that emergency supplies of Schedule 4 and Schedule 5 controlled drugs are permitted under Regulations 224 (Emergency sale etc by pharmacist: prescriber unable to provide prescription) and 225 (Emergency sale etc by pharmacist: at patient's request) of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 provided that the conditions outlined in those Regulations are observed.³

Yours sincerely,



Canice Ward

Head of Medicines Regulatory Group

Department of Health

Cc Joe Brogan CD Accountable Officer HSCB

¹ http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/COVID19_EmergencySupplyService_Spec_Guide_FINAL.pdf

² <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/mdr-amendments-010520.pdf>

³ Phenobarbital Sodium for the treatment of epilepsy can also be supplied under the provisions of regulations 224 and 225.

Appendix 1

Schedule 2 CD	Schedule 3 CD	Schedule 4 part 1 CD
Alfentanil	Buprenorphine	Alprazolam
Amphetamine	Gabapentin	Chlordiazepoxide
Diamorphine	Meprobamate	Clobazam
Dipipanone	Midazolam	Clonazepam
Dronabinol	Pentazocine	Diazepam
Fentanyl	Pregabalin	Flurazepam
Hydromorphone	Temazepam	Loprazolam
Ketamine	Tramadol	Lorazepam
Lisdexamphetamine		Lormetazepam
Methadone		Nitrazepam
Methylphenidate		Oxazepam
Morphine		Sativex
Nabilone		Zaleplon
Oxycodone		Zolpidem
Pethidine		Zopiclone
Remifentanil		
Sufentanil		
Tapentadol		