



From: The Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
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Particular significance for:

Registered pharmacists
Nurse Independent Prescribers
Other relevant individuals and healthcare professionals

Dear Colleagues

**THE MISUSE OF DRUGS (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND)
2012**

The above regulations amend the 2002 Regulations¹ and come into operation on 10 May 2012.

1. The amendments provide that Pharmacist Independent Prescribers, as defined in the amendment, may prescribe any controlled drug in Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the 2002 Regulations, as amended. (Prescription of cocaine, diamorphine, dipipanone and their salts, or products containing these substances, for a person addicted to any controlled drug listed in the Schedule to the 1973 Regulations² is not permitted, except for the purpose of treating organic disease or injury.)

Those who will avail of this provision must ensure that prescribing is undertaken in conjunction with professional standards and guidance particularly as they pertain to prescriber's competence; training; monitoring and governance arrangements, including the role of the Accountable Officer, in both the Health Service and independent settings and the principle of separation of prescribing and dispensing roles.

2. The amendments provide that Nurse Independent Prescribers, as defined in the 2002 Regulations, as amended, may prescribe any controlled drug in Schedule 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the 2002 Regulations, as amended. (Prescription of cocaine, diamorphine, dipipanone and their salts, or products containing these substances, for a person addicted to any controlled drug listed in the Schedule to the 1973 Regulations is not permitted, except for the purpose of treating organic disease or injury.)

Again, those who will avail of this provision must ensure that prescribing is undertaken in conjunction with professional standards and guidance particularly as they pertain to prescriber's competence; training; monitoring and governance arrangements, including the role of the Accountable Officer, in both the Health Service and independent settings and the principle of separation of prescribing and dispensing roles.

3. The above amendment regulations make provision for Nurse and Pharmacist Independent Prescribers to administer to a patient any controlled drug that they may prescribe under the regulations, without the directions of a doctor or dentist. They also provide that any person may administer any controlled

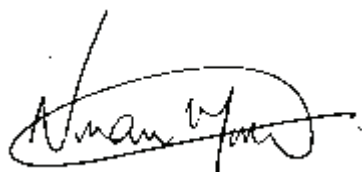
¹ The Misuse of Drugs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002

² The Misuse of Drugs (Notification of and Supply to Addicts)(Northern Ireland) Regulations 1973

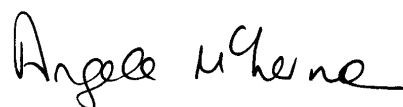
drug in accordance with the directions of a Nurse Independent Prescriber or Pharmacist Independent Prescriber, provided it is prescribed in accordance with the regulations.

4. A further amendment permits a Nurse Independent Prescriber, or Supplementary Prescriber acting under and in accordance with a Clinical Management Plan, to compound any drug in Schedule 2, 3, 4 or 5 for the purposes of administration under the relevant regulation. Any person acting in accordance with the written directions of a Nurse Independent Prescriber, a Pharmacist Independent Prescriber, or Supplementary Prescriber acting under and in accordance with a Clinical Management Plan, may compound any drug in Schedule 2, 3, 4 or 5 for the purposes of administration under the relevant regulation.
5. The provision previously relating to use of diamorphine under a Patient Group Direction in a coronary care unit or an accident and emergency department has been amended to provide that a registered nurse or a pharmacist, when acting in their capacity as such, may supply or offer to supply, under and in accordance with the terms of a PGD, diamorphine or morphine where administration of such drugs is required for the immediate, necessary treatment of sick or injured persons, in any setting.
6. Nurse Independent Prescribers have been added to the list of those who may supply certain specified articles (paraphernalia, Reg 6A) for administering or preparing controlled drugs.
7. Regulation 4 of the 2002 regulations, relating to exceptions for the import and export of Schedule 4 Part II drugs (e.g. the anabolic steroids), has been amended to the effect that import or export, to be lawful, must be carried out in person for administration of the drug to that person.
8. Pharmacists have been added to Schedule 8 of the 2002 Regulations (those persons who may supply or administer a specified controlled drug under a patient group direction.)
9. The amendment regulations also make the necessary arrangements regarding possession by specified persons, when appropriate, of controlled drugs for the purposes described in the regulations, supply, offer to supply, requisitions and furnishing of information.
10. This letter is for information and guidance and may also indicate to organisations where local policies and procedures for the governance of controlled drugs needs to be updated. It is not a definitive legal account of the effect of the amendments and professionals should consult their respective regulatory or leadership organisations for further guidance. Helpful information may be found in Home Office Circular 009/2012 which relates to the corresponding GB Regulations.

Yours sincerely



Dr Norman Morrow
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer



Mrs Angela McLernon
Chief Nursing Officer (Acting)