

TAYSIDE PRESCRIBER

ADTC Supplement No. 14

July 2001

PATIENT GROUP DIRECTIONS New Responsibilities

Current Practice Must Comply with Legislation by 30 September 2001

What is a Patient Group Direction?

A Patient Group Direction (PGD) is a specific written instruction for the supply or administration of medicines to patients who cannot be identified before presentation. A PGD can be used instead of a prescription where treatment is provided by a NHS Trust, Health Board, GP or dental practices, or NHS funded family planning clinic. The majority of clinical care should be provided on an individual, patient specific basis.

Who can use them?

The law states that nurses, midwives, health visitors, chiropodists, pharmacists, paramedics, optometrists, radiographers, orthoptists and physiotherapists are able to supply and administer specified medicines using a PGD.

What can they be used for?

PGDs should be used in situations where patients can receive additional benefit:

- Timely access to treatment
- Reduce patient waiting times
- Avoid hospital admission
- Maximise the use of resources
- Fully utilise professional skills

What can't they be used for?

PGDs cannot be used to supply Controlled Drugs. PGDs should only be used in exceptional circumstances for:

- Black Triangle Drugs
- Unlicensed Medicines
- Medicines used in children

What are the alternatives to PGDs?

Other ways of providing medicines should also be considered:

- Individualised care pathways
- Symptomatic Relief Protocols
- Patient Prescription

How do I begin a PGD?

You need a local senior doctor and pharmacist to agree to take on the development of the PGD. Professions involved in the delivery of care using the PGD must also be involved.

How should I go about it?

Ensure that any PGD meets the criteria set out in NHS HDL(2001)7; see framework overleaf. You will need to design a protocol of care, drawn from best practice and published evidence. You will also need to design treatment records, patient information leaflets and agree referral pathways. The training needs of the practitioners using the PGD will need to be assessed and any gaps in skills and knowledge addressed. Arrangements to obtain the medicines required should be made. Lastly, an audit cycle should be designed.

What next?

The completed PGD must be submitted to the the Drugs & Therapeutics Committee PGD Sub-Group for approval by the Trust. Until this is completed, the PGD has no legal status and cannot be used.

**All care provided through
PGDs must be approved by
30th September 2001**

Framework for Development of a Patient Group Direction

STAGE	INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED	ACCOUNTABLE FOR	RECORD
1. Patient Group Direction Development	Locals group of doctor(s), Pharmacist(s), and other relevant professionals	Ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical appropriateness • Compliance with required standards • Widespread consultation • Training needs assessment • Maintenance of best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of key individuals involved in development • Extent of consultation undertaken
2. Approval by lead Clinical Group/ Directorate/LHCC	Clinical Group/LHCC/Directorate Lead Clinician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurance that the PGD is clinically appropriate for the patient group • Ensuring that the required audit cycles are completed • Ensuring that the PGD is reviewed and resubmitted as required 	Signature of lead clinician
3. Approval on behalf of D&T Committee(s)	D&T Committee through a joint PGD Sub-Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assuring that PGD meets the specification required and are suitable for authorisation by the Trust(s) 	Record of approval by D&T Committee(s)
4. Authorisation on behalf of the Trust(s)	Clinical Governance Lead for the Trust(s)	Ensuring that the policy meets legal and ethical requirements such that the Trust can accept vicarious liability	Signature of Clinical Governance Lead

Patient Group Directions should be submitted through the Trust Chief Pharmacists' Office

- Pharmacy Department, Ninewells Hospital for TUHT protocols
- Trust HQ (Pharmacy), Ashludie Hospital for TPCT protocols

Further Information is available from andrew.radley@TPCT.scot.nhs.uk