

Sheffield Specialist Palliative Medicines Management in the Community - A Framework for Shared Care

Introduction

This document has been produced to support teams in caring for patients in the community with specialist palliative care needs. The document outlines a generic approach to the management of medications or their applications that are unfamiliar to non-specialists, underpinned by 'The Adult Sheffield Palliative Care Formulary', the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundations Trust (STHFT) End of Life Guidelines and individualised patient plans.

The aim is to provide a framework for practitioners to:

- Set clear requirements for shared care or delegation of care across community teams.
- Outline information and resources available locally and nationally to meet these requirements.

Responsibilities of the Specialist Clinician

- Assess patient symptoms with regard to appropriateness of medication, considering any contraindications.
- Discuss benefits and side effects of the medication with the patient/carer and obtain informed consent, in line with national guidance. This is particularly important for unlicensed products.
- Provide patient/carer with a relevant plan, written information on use, side effects and need for monitoring of medication.
- Provide patient/carer with contact details for support and help if required; both in and out of hours.
- Initiate and titrate the dosage regimen either as an inpatient in the hospital or hospice, or on an outpatient/home visit assessment.
- Assess response and side effects.
- Arrange shared care with the GP and Community Nursing team when patient is managed on a stable regimen. To write a prescription for an appropriate quantity, usually at least 7 days' worth, to ensure continuity of supply in the community. If care is to be shared and patient to be managed by Primary Care, then ensure smooth handover and continued supply until prescribing is transferred to Primary Care.
- Provide the GP with contact details of the specialist clinician/team involved in the care of the patient.
- Provide clear advice on prescribing and any syringe pump use.
- Advise the Primary Care prescriber regarding continuation of medication, including the duration of treatment and potential dose changes.
- Discuss any concerns with the GP/Community Nursing team regarding the patient's therapy.

- Provide clear instructions to the GP, Community Nursing team, Community Specialist Palliative Care Nurses and other health care professionals involved in the patient's care. The patient will have a copy of this letter and advice.
- Provide a copy of these letters to other services as appropriate, e.g. Out of Hours services in case of deterioration or if the patient requires additional medications.
- Review the patient's response and continuing appropriateness of the specified medication at specified intervals, sending a written summary to the GP.
- Provide any other advice or information for the GP and community nursing, hospital teams or hospice teams if required.

The information to be provided as described above could be provided in the form of a template or management plan.

Responsibilities of the Primary Care Clinician

- Confirm the agreement and acceptance of the shared care prescribing arrangement and that supply arrangements have been finalised; or contact the requesting specialists if there are concerns in joining in shared care arrangements.
- Continue to prescribe the medication for the patient once stable and arrange on-going monitoring as advised by the specialist.
- Refer to specialist when symptoms fail to respond or when change of administration route may be indicated.
- Seek the advice of the specialist if there any concerns with the patient's therapy.
- Review the patient at specified intervals as agreed with the specialist clinician to monitor control of symptoms.
- Report any serious adverse drug reactions to the appropriate bodies, e.g. MHRA and the referring specialist. See [yellow card](#).
- Liaise with community and specialist nurses, as appropriate, to provide on-going patient care and monitoring.
- For medication supplied from another provider prescribers are advised to follow recommendations for [Recording Specialist Issued Drugs on Clinical Practice Systems](#).

Responsibilities of Community Nursing Team/Community Specialist Palliative Care Nurses

- Ensure that they have the necessary information and an understanding of the medication in order to complete a care plan and administer medication safely.
- Seek advice when unsure about the appropriate management of the patient, e.g. regarding medication use, dose, frequency or maximum.
- Undertake specific training, if needed, in order to have adequate information and understanding of the medication.
- Be aware of the potential side effects and beneficial effects of the medication.

- Record the contact details for the GP, community teams and specialist teams involved in the care of the patient in the patients care plan to ensure adequate patient monitoring and understand who to contact in the event of any problems.
- Be aware of and follow the: [BD BodyGuard™ T Syringe Pump Protocol](#), [The Adult Sheffield Palliative Care Formulary](#) and [Guidance for caring for dying patients](#).

Responsibilities of Patients or Carers

- Be fully involved in, and in agreement with, the decision to move to shared care.
- Report any suspected adverse effects to their Community Nurse team specialist or Primary Care prescriber whilst receiving the medication.
- Read the product information provided to them.

Useful Palliative Care Resources

➤ Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

- [Guidance for caring for dying patients](#)
- [The Adult Sheffield Palliative Care Formulary](#)
- [BD BodyGuard™ T Syringe Pump Protocol](#)
- STHFT Community Agile Pharmacy Service (CAPS)
 - **0114 3078100** (8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, 8am-12pm Sat and Sun).
- STHFT Medicines Information:
 - NGH **0114 2714371** 9am-5pm Monday to Friday
 - RHH **0114 2712346** 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.
- The Palliative Care Specialist Registrar on-call for Palliative Medicine can be contacted via STH switchboard on **0114 2434343**.

➤ St Luke's Hospice

- The specialist team at St Luke's Hospice operates a 7-day service between the hours 9am-5pm.
- The team are available to take calls and give advice within the hours detailed above via the rapid response phone, which can be accessed through the main hospice switchboard on **0114 2369911**.

➤ ICB/Primary Care

Contacts for answering medication information queries:

- NHS Sheffield Medicines Optimisation Team: For non-urgent queries 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. E-mail: syicb-sheffield.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net
- Local community pharmacies.
- Patient GP practice/PCN Pharmacy team.

Accessing EoL medications:

- If the patient's local pharmacy does not have EoL medicines in stock the following [pharmacies](#) have been commissioned to keep the following [medicines](#) in stock.

➤ **Other**

- [British National Formulary](#)
- [Medusa Injectable Medicines Guide](#) (Do not press 'Logout')
- Syringe pump compatibility information can be accessed via [Palliative Care Guidelines Plus \(pallcare.info\)](#) (select 'SD drug compatibility' in the index') or contact Medicines Information.
- Palliative Care Formulary (PCF 8) – access to the information detailed in the book version is available via the STHFT Community Agile Pharmacy Service (CAPS) on **0114 3078100** (8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, 8am-12pm Sat and Sun).
- [Electronic Medicines Compendium](#) for individual Summary of Product Characteristics.

Document Details

Authors

Original document produced by Sarah Alton, in conjunction with colleagues from Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, St Luke's Hospice and Sheffield CCG.
Approved November 2020.

Version History

Version	Date	Details	Author
1	11/20		Sarah Alton
2	09/22	Format revision, CCG logo changed to ICB; word 'complex' changed to 'unfamiliar', term syringe driver changed to syringe pump, sentence added to 'Responsibilities of Community Nursing team section to highlight the need to seek advice when unsure, resources updated, document details section added	Fiona Stephenson
3	2023	Syringe pump compatibility resources updated following discontinuation of palliative.drugs	Fiona Stephenson

Approved by Sheffield Area Prescribing Group

Date approved: 3rd October 2023

Review date: 3rd October 2026

STHFT document ref: STHCS/MM/10 V3