

## Medication acquisition for Covid19 symptom control in care homes without nursing: guidance and templates

### Background

This guidance is designed to support care home staff on the acquisition and administration of anticipatory end of life medicines during COVID-19. This guidance should be used in conjunction with [Wirral ratified RMOH Homely Remedy policy](#), Medicines and Controlled Drugs Policies.

This document is intended to provide concise information for commissioners and providers to utilise and adapt as they wish, to support obtaining medicines and to ensure the provision of safe and timely treatments for those presenting with common COVID-19 related symptoms **during the COVID-19 period only**.

This guidance is not clinical in nature and does not remove the need to seek additional medical advice where there is doubt or concern about the condition being treated. For clinical support please refer to **NICE NG163**: COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing symptoms (including at the end of life) in the community, (this guidance also details non-drug interventions which should be explored in the first instance) or to locally derived guidance Caring for Patients Dying at Home from COVID-19 produced by the Wirral Wide Palliative Care group.

During COVID-19 care homes are recommended to utilise homely remedy arrangements to obtain over the counter medicines.

Individually prescribed prescription only medicines, including controlled drugs (CDs) should be obtained via a prescription or patient specific direction (PSD) as per Wirral Palliative care medicine supply for Covid-19 patients

Care homes without nursing cannot carry stocks of CDs or prescription only medicines (POMs).

Reuse of medicines is an option that has been made available to support rapid access to medicines during COVID-19, further information is available at:

[https://itservices.midlandsandlancashirecsu.nhs.uk/media/1400/reuse\\_carehome.pdf](https://itservices.midlandsandlancashirecsu.nhs.uk/media/1400/reuse_carehome.pdf)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reuse-of-medicines-in-a-care-home-or-hospice>

Additional information is available from the CQC COVID-19 resource page:

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/-19-medicines-information-adult-social-care-providers>

## Definitions

**Homely remedy:** a non-prescription medicine that a care home can purchase over the counter (i.e. the medicines are owned by the care home) for the use of its service users.

**POM: Prescription-Only Medicine** - must be prescribed by a doctor or other authorised health professional and must be dispensed from a pharmacy or from another specifically licensed place

**P: Pharmacy medicine** - an intermediate level of control, can be bought only from pharmacies and under a pharmacist's supervision.

**GSL: General Sales List** - may be bought from retail stores, such as a newsagent, a supermarket, or a vending machine in a shop.

**EoL:** end of life medicines supporting palliative care

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## Medicine acquisition in a care home without nursing

### For a service user with COVID-19 diagnosis

- Consider other causes for the symptoms.
- Continue to screen and manage symptoms with homely remedies as per [Wirral ratified RMOCHomely remedies policy](#) If required, access usual GP care or Out of Hours care following local arrangements.
- Discuss and agree a care plan with the service user, their family, GP, and carers.
- If there are concerns about an increasing number of other people in the same residence who also have COVID-19 symptoms, then consider requesting individual clinical reviews for anticipatory medication recommended for end of life care [

### For a service user with COVID-19 diagnosis and deteriorating health

- Request an urgent clinical review from the service user's GP or Out of Hours services as appropriate.
- Review and agree the service user's care plan with the service user, their family, GP, and carers.
- Follow local and national symptom management guidance
  - Care of the Patient Dying at Home from COVID-19 (local guidance produced by Wirral Palliative Care Group)
  - [COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing symptoms \(including at the end of life\) in the community](#).
- If appropriate, offer homely remedies for symptom relief from [Wirral ratified RMOCHomely remedy policy](#)
- Consider requesting prescription for anticipatory medication recommended for end of life care as detailed in the Wirral Supply of Palliative Care Medicines Policy

### For a service user with COVID-19 diagnosis approaching the end of life

If the service user is likely to recover in the next 12 hours:

- Review and agree the service user's care plan with the service user, their family, GP, and carers.
- Follow local and national symptom management guidance
  - Care of the Patient Dying at Home from COVID-19 (local guidance produced by Wirral Palliative Care Group)
  - [COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing symptoms \(including at the end of life\) in the community](#).
- Request prescription for anticipatory medications recommended for end of life care as per Wirral Supply of Palliative Care Medicines Process
- In a supply crisis, or where medicines are not available in a timely enough fashion, consider re-using another service user's medication [\[refer to re-use guidance\]](#).

### For a service user with COVID-19 diagnosis at the end of life

If the service user is likely to reach the end of life in the next 12 hours:

- Follow the service user's care plan as agreed with the service user, their family, GP, and carers.

- Request an urgent clinical review from the service user's GP or Out of Hours as appropriate.
- Follow local and national symptom management guidance
  - Care of the Patient Dying at Home from COVID-19 (local guidance produced by Wirral Palliative Care Group)

[COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing symptoms \(including at the end of life\) in the community.](#)
- Request prescription for anticipatory medication recommended for end of life care]. as per Wirral Supply of Palliative Care Medicines Process
- In a supply crisis, or where medicines are not available in a timely enough fashion, consider re-using another service user's medication [[refer to re-use policy](#)].

## Priority methods for medicines acquisition

### Homely remedy

- For a service user who would benefit from symptom relief.

### Prescription / PSD

- If there are concerns about an increasing number of other people in the same residence who also have COVID-19 symptoms (as per Wirral Supply of Palliative Care Medicines Process)
- For a service user with deteriorating health.
- For a service user approaching the end of life or at the end of life and there is no delay in usual prescription process.

### Re-use or repurposing (following individual clinical review)

- For a service user at the end of life when medicines are not available in a timely manner.
- In a supply crisis when no other stock or alternative route to obtain symptom control medication is available.

## Appendix 1

### Ordering Prescription only Medicines (POMs) via Prescription: In Hours

NB. it is illegal for the care home without nursing to administer POMs without authority from a prescriber e.g. a prescription, or patient specific direction.

Work closely with service user's family/carers and GP as per standard care home policy to determine individual emergency plan. Identify need for POM.



Exclude any medicines available to purchase via a shop or pharmacy (GSL or P medicines). These are available via a Homely Remedy policy and **DO NOT** need to be ordered via prescription.  
**DO NOT OVER STOCK.** Prescription medicines normally only used for an individual named service user.



Follow procedure as detailed in Wirral Palliative Care Medicines supply for COVID patients Primary Care to obtain POM



Non-isolating individual to collect medications from community pharmacy, or organise and agree delivery with the community pharmacy or Wirral designated driver service



Ensure medication is entered as stock into medication receipt log

### Ordering Prescription only Medicines (POMs) via Prescription: Out of Hours

Work closely with service user's family and GP as per standard care home/hospice policy to determine individual emergency plan. Identify need for POM



**Consider:** Exclude any medicines available to purchase via a shop or pharmacy (GSL or P medicines). These are available via a Homely Remedies policy and **DO NOT** need to be ordered.  
**DO NOT OVER STOCK.** Prescription medicines to be used for an individual named service user.



Follow procedure as detailed in Wirral Palliative Care Medicines supply for COVID patients Primary Care to obtain POM

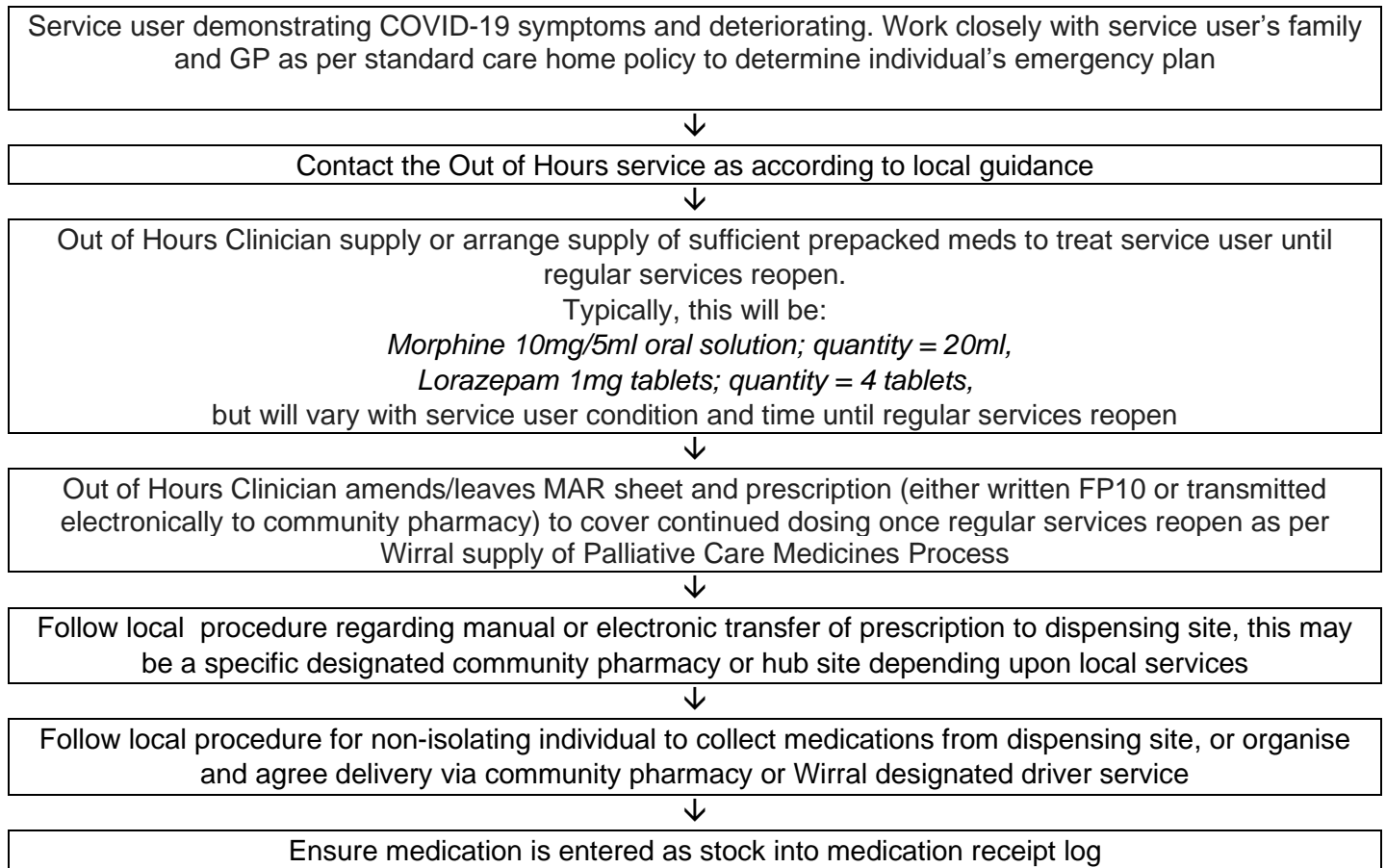


Follow local procedure for non-isolating individual to collect medications from dispensing site, or organise and agree delivery by community pharmacy or via Wirral designated driver service



Ensure medication is entered as stock into medication receipt log

**Ordering medication for service user demonstrating COVID-19 symptoms and deteriorating:  
Out of Hours  
Please refer to Wirral Pathway**



## Reuse of medication for service user demonstrating COVID-19 symptoms and rapidly deteriorating: In Hours

NB. it is illegal for the care home to administer POMs without authority from a prescriber e.g. a prescription, MAR, or patient specific direction.

Service user demonstrating COVID-19 symptoms and rapidly deteriorating. Work closely with service user's family and GP as per standard care home policy to determine individual emergency plan



Contact the service user's GP practice, request clinical assessment and prescription for that individual service user



If reuse supply is available, administer doses in line with GP direction and national [SOP](#)

## References:

1. The Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2001/3998/regulation/19/made>
2. Controlled drugs: safe use and management, NICE guideline:  
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng46>
3. CQC: Nigel's surgery 28: Management of controlled drugs  
<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/nigels-surgery-28-management-controlled-drugs>

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