

Patient Group Directions and Patient Specific Directions in General Practice September 2014

The following CCG guidance has been developed in response to several GP surgery queries regarding this issue and is based on the advice provided by NICE, MHRA, BMA on their websites. Please go to the following links for more details:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/mpg2/resources/guidance-patient-group-directions-pdf>

<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Howweregulate/Medicines/Availabilityprescribing-sellingandsupplyingofmedicines/Frequentlyraisedissues/PatientSpecificDirections/index.htm>

http://www.bma.org.uk/images/pgdpatientspecificdirectionsgeneralpracticeaug2010_tcm41-199271.pdf

Patient Group Direction (PGD)

A Patient Group Direction is a written instruction for the supply and/or administration of a named licensed medicine for a defined clinical condition. PGDs are written instructions for the supply or administration of medicines to groups of patients who may not be individually identified before presentation of treatment.

PGDs allow a range of **specified registered health care professionals** to supply and/or administer a medicine directly to a patient with an identified clinical condition without them necessarily seeing an independent prescriber. The health care professional working within the PGD is responsible for assessing that the patient fits the criteria set out in the PGD.

The following may supply or administer medicines under a patient group direction: Registered: Nurses; Pharmacists; chiropodists and podiatrists; dental hygienist; dental therapist; dietitians; midwives; occupational therapists; optometrists; orthoptists; orthotists and prosthetists; paramedics; physiotherapists; radiographers; speech and language therapists. Individual health professionals must be named and authorised to practice under a PGD.

PGDs are intended to improve patient care by enabling registered health professionals other than doctors to supply and/or administer medicines to patients. Examples of where PGDs may be appropriate are services where assessment and treatment follows a clearly predictable pattern (e.g. immunisation and vaccination). In general practice they can be used to enable registered nurses to administer a prescription only medicine to a group of patients who fit the criteria specified in the PGD, for example, to administer vaccinations.

Immunisation and vaccination PGDs are now the responsibility of NHS England who will be distributing to GP practices to download, sign off and use.

Please note Health Care Assistants (HCAs) cannot legally supply or administer Prescription Only Medicines under the authorisation of a PGD.

Patient Specific Direction (PSD)

A Patient Specific Direction is a written instruction from a doctor or dentist or other independent prescriber for a medicine to be supplied or administered to a named patient. This may in primary care be a prescription or simple written or electronic instruction in the patient's notes for example.

PSDs do not limit those who can supply or administer the medicine. A suitably trained health care assistant can do so even though they cannot work under a PGD.

PSDs are also often used in relation to the administration of vaccinations for named patients as well as Depo-Provera, B12 and Zoladex.

Each practice must have protocols in place for their staff to follow to administer a POM using a PSD.

The CCG recommends that the majority of clinical care should be provided on an individual, patient-specific basis.

The use of Patient Group Directions (PGDs) should be reserved for those situations where this offers an advantage for patient care without compromising patient safety, and where it is consistent with appropriate professional relationships and accountability. If a patient-specific direction exists or if the nurse is an independent prescriber and competent to make treatment decisions in that field, then there is no need for a Patient Group Direction.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Do PGDs apply to HCAs?

No. The Medicines Act does not allow HCAs to administer POMs under a PGD, as they are not included in the list of 'authorised' persons. An authorised person is one who is professionally regulated - HCAs therefore have to use a PSD or signed prescription as authority.

2. What needs to be included in a PSD?

A PSD, signed by a qualified, registered prescriber, at a minimum should specify:

- Name of patient and/or other individual patient identifiers (evidence that the patient has been considered as an individual)
- Name, form and strength of medicine (generic or brand name where appropriate)
- Route of administration
- Dose
- Frequency
- Start and finish dates.
- Signature of prescriber.

A PSD is individually tailored to the needs of a single patient so more information may be required to enable safe supply and/or administration of some medicines and to manage identified risks.

There is no set format for PSDs written into the legislation and you do not have to define an instruction as one.

A PSD may be a written or electronic instruction from the GP to the nurse in the patient record relating to a specific individual patient.

A list of individually named patients to be treated with a named POM, signed by a doctor/prescriber would constitute a PSD in general practice (for example for healthcare assistants administering vaccines at flu clinics), providing that each patient on the list has been considered individually by the independent prescriber.

Each practice must have protocols in place for their staff to follow to administer a POM using a PSD.

3. Can PGDs be used in General Practice to administer non-NHS treatment?

Under the Medicines Act GP practices are not permitted to use PGDs to enable nurses to administer treatment in NHS GP practices in non-NHS circumstances, for example providing private travel vaccinations such as Yellow Fever, Rabies, Meningitis etc. Patient Specific Directions must be used in these circumstances unless they are independent prescribers.

4. Can PGDs be used for travel clinics?

PGDs are useful for NHS travel health services as in many practices these are delivered by practice nurses who have a special expertise in that field. However they can only be used for those treatments which are provided on the NHS and not for private treatment. So where Hepatitis B vaccination can be given for travel and the patient is charged, a PGD cannot be used, but if it is given on the NHS then it can be administered under a PGD.

Further FAQ on Patient Specific Directions can be found at;

<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Howweregulate/Medicines/Availabilityprescribingandsupplyingofmedicines/Frequentlyraisedissues/PatientSpecificDirections/index.htm>