

NHS Wales: End of Life COVID-19 Medicines Service to supply Just in Time Emergency Medicines Packs- Update to Service October 2020

Update

In order to ensure continuity of the service, the number and sites of the EoL Pharmacy Hubs has changed. The JEMP provision will be provided via the 'normal' on-call Pharmacy service.

Each hub will have slightly different processes dependent on the nature of their Pharmacist on-call provision. These will be detailed in the action cards. This is a COVID-19 service and will be reviewed in January 2021

Background

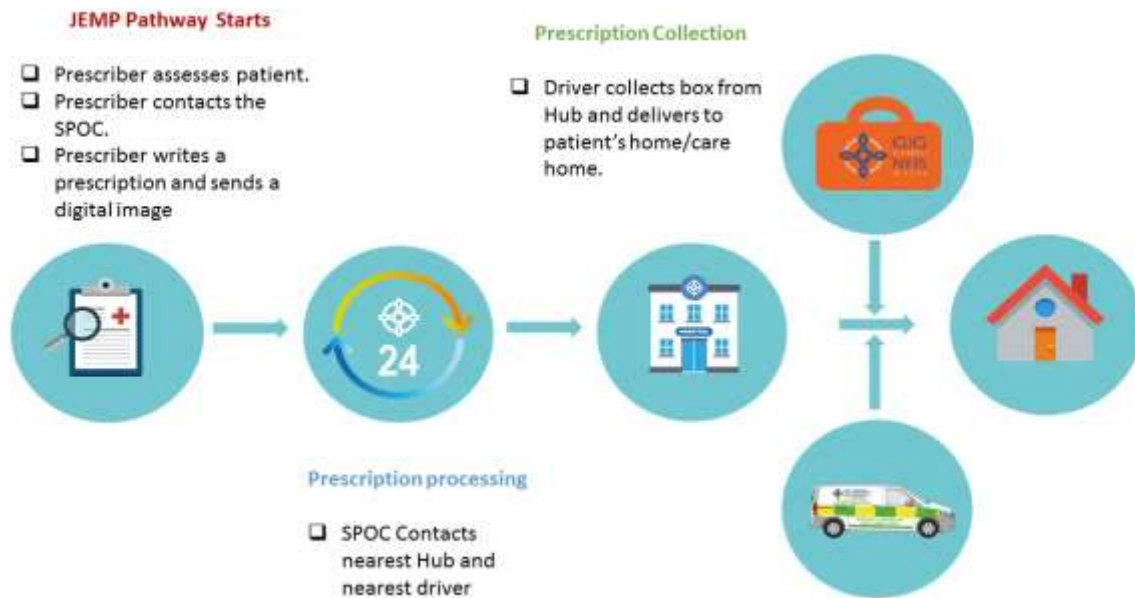
Access to palliative care medication has been identified by professionals as one of the biggest concerns when caring for terminally ill patients and consequently compromises the delivery of good End of Life (EoL) care. When a patient is to receive EoL care in the community, it is important that the appropriate medicines that may be required to support that patient's symptom control are readily available, both in and out of normal hours.

Poor communication, planning, pain management and co-ordination lead to tragic and avoidable suffering. Current best practice within palliative care promotes proactive anticipatory prescribing to enable prompt symptom relief at whatever time the patient develops distressing symptoms. However, due to the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 there are increasing concerns about medicine availability during the global pandemic. A change in prescribing approach is needed from traditional 'Just in Case' prescribing to 'Just in Time' prescribing, i.e. medicines must be supplied on demand rather than in advance to ensure fair and equitable access to all. Traditional 'Just in Case' prescribing for each patient is likely to exhaust the national supply of End of Life (EoL) medicines resulting in stock potentially sitting in the wrong places, unable to be moved around quickly and thus leading to increased waiting times for medicines.

The existing supply of EoL medicines in the community is through community pharmacies and dispensing GP practices or GP Out of Hours / Urgent Care Centres, with no central medicine stock control by NHS Wales. The unprecedented demand due to COVID-19 will constrict the total supply of EoL medicines and result in increased prescription turn-around time and/or critical shortages without more centralised control across the seven Health Boards and Velindre NHS Trust.

EoL Pharmacy Hubs (EPHs) and a distribution network have been established to centralise procurement ensuring to allow 100% geographical coverage of Wales; a prompt response (preferably within 2 hours but may be longer) with an estimated delivery time communicated to requesting clinician.

When a person is identified as requiring symptom control at the end of life, an appropriate practitioner can request EoL medicines which will be supplied as a standardised 'Just in time Emergency Medicines Pack (JEMP). These packs are requested through the single point of contact (SPOC), which will ensure that medicines will be processed at the nearest EPH and delivered to the patient's home. The original two hour delivery time aim has been removed in the updated service. However, the clinician will be informed of the expected delivery time.



1. AIMS AND INTENDED SERVICE OUTCOMES

- To avoid the distress caused to the patient and their families due to delayed access to medicines used for common symptoms at the end of life during the Covid pandemic.
- To improve access for people to specialist medicines from an agreed list when they are required by ensuring prompt access and continuity of supply
- A fully co-ordinated call-out system including delivery of EoL medicines to the patient during the Covid pandemic.

2. SERVICE DESCRIPTION

- To supply specialist EoL medicines outside of normal pharmacy opening hours, however there may be occasions to supply within normal opening hours, e.g. when local primary care services are unable to supply the

required medication in normal working hours.

- To ensure the users of this service have prompt access to these medicines at all times (24/7) across Wales.
- Each EPH will supply JEMPs in response to a prescription/order presented by practitioners via the SPOC.
- Health Courier Service will collect the JEMP and deliver to patient's home/carehome.
- The content of the packs will be regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect the availability of medicines and changes in practice or guidelines.

3. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- It should be noted that this service is not for dispensing high quantities of medications or replenishing stock in patients' homes. A local pharmacy procurement expert should be contacted for further advice
- The service is not appropriate for dispensing "bespoke" prescriptions.
- The JEMP will only contain injectable medicines. Provisions should be made locally to ensure prompt access to oral medication e.g. oral morphine or lorazepam.

4. SERVICE OUTLINE

4.1 WHEN to access the End of Life COVID-19 Medicines Service?

Local service provision for obtaining EoL should be followed during normal working hours if these are available e.g. by using nominated community pharmacies.

The End of Life COVID-19 Medicines Service should be accessed in the following circumstances:

During Normal WorkingHours

If local service provision are unable to supply within an acceptable timescale, the appropriate practitioner will need to contact the SPOC to request a JEMP.

If alternative suitable medicines are available locally then the prescriber should be contacted to discuss.

Outside Normal WorkingHours

If EoL medicines are required to be supplied, the appropriate practitioner will need to contact the SPOC to request a JEMP.

Suitable Patients

A patient is identified as appropriate for a JEMP if they have been assessed by an appropriate practitioner and are entering the terminal phase of life, requiring immediate symptom control medication. This scheme is not intended to supply

medicines in anticipation - only when a need has been identified.

4.2 HOW to access the End of Life COVID-19 Medicines Service?

If it is anticipated that the patient's medical condition is deteriorating into the terminal phase of illness, and requiring symptom control the clinician can request a supply of a JEMP by contacting the SPOC.

Accessing the SPOC (Further details on Action card 1)

The SPOC is a telephone-based provision which will co-ordinate the service. All requests for JEMP will be channeled through a single team for administrative triage.

The SPOC team will contact the closest EPH to request a JEMP and will liaise with Health Courier Service to arrange delivery to the individual patient.

When contacting the SPOC, the clinician will need to request access to the service and write the appropriate prescription/medicines order form.

The SPOC team will request the following details:

- Name of Patient
- Address of patient including postcode
- DOB of patient
- Confirmation of the medication on the order form

It is important that the clinician knows what is contained in the JEMP before completing the order. There is the possibility of medicine shortages in the future, thus the content of the pre-packed JEMPs may change. Up to date information is contained on the AWTTTC website via the following link:

<http://www.awttc.org/covid-19-eol-medicines-service>

Before phoning the SPOC, the prescribing clinician sends a digital image of the order form to the SPOC (contact is Health Courier Service Wales) via the Hospify app. If this is not possible, the OOH shift lead can transfer the image via Hospify on behalf of the clinician or the image can be emailed to NWSSP_HCSControlHub@wales.nhs.uk

This should be followed by a phone call to the SPOC to ensure order request is received via: **0300 1234092**

The original paper order form will need to be handed to the Health Courier Service Wales by the individual receiving the medicines in the patient's house. If the order form is not at the patient's house, the courier can be asked to collect it from the prescriber, to ensure it is returned with the empty JEMP box to the relevant HUB within 24 hours. It is important that the administration chart(s) is left in the house.

4.3 The CONTENTS of the JEMP

The palliative JEMPs contain six medicinal products:

Medicine	Strength	Quantity
Morphine sulphate injection	10mg/ml	10
Midazolam injection	10mg/2ml	10
Hyoscine hydrobromide	400mcg/ml	5
Levomepromazine injection	25mg/ml	5
Haloperidol injection	5mg/mL	5
Water for Injection	10ml	5

A signed order form needs to be completed for the all the medicines contained in the JEMP. The JEMP must be issued as a complete pack. It is not possible to tailor the packs as they are prepared in advance. The content of the packs will be regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect the availability of medicines and changes in practice or guidelines. Up to date information on the content of the JEMPs will be available via the AWTTTC website. The JEMP only contains injectable medicines. Provisions should be made locally to ensure prompt access to oral medication e.g. oral morphine or lorazepam.

4.4 AUTHORISATION to Administer the Drugs in the JEMP

As the JEMP has not been labelled with a dose or directions, the clinician will need to ensure the EoL medicines are written on a suitable drug administration chart if community nursing teams are required to administer. This will be written in advance of the drugs being delivered if possible. The JEMPs contain a blank medicines administration chart.

Drugs from the JEMP can be administered by a doctor, or by the community nurses if the medicines are authorised (prescribed doses, indication, directions, signed and dated) by a prescriber on the prescription chart.

Community nurses requiring support or advice in managing symptoms should contact the prescribing clinician, the Health Board's on-call pharmacist, the OOH palliative care team or can access information on the following website:

<https://www.wales.pallcare.info/>

COVID-19 documents can be found by clicking on Document Library

The name of the medicine, the strength, the batch number and expiry date should be checked prior to administration in the usual manner and the usual documentation completed.

4.5 USING and RETURNING JEMPs

Once the pack is opened and the contents start to be used, it is the responsibility of the professionals involved to ensure that the contents are used appropriately and safely.

If the pack is opened it should be retained and the contents used according to the patient's needs, until empty or no longer required. If the patient has escalating or ongoing palliative care needs, the contents of the pack may not be sufficient to meet future requirements and further prescribing and supply may be required. It should be noted that the End of Life COVID-19 Medicines Service is not for dispensing high quantities of medications or replenishing stock in patients' homes. A local pharmacy procurement expert should be contacted for further advice.

5 COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER TEAMS

A communication will be sent out to all healthcare teams involved in EoL care, primary care and acute care.

Each time an EPH issues a JEMP, the identified pharmacy lead in each health board locality will be notified to ensure appropriate local follow up processes are in place.

6 PHARMACY RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 JEMP medicines

The EoL medicines will be assembled according to local health board pharmacy SOPs and following the EoL Pharmacy Hub - JiT emergency medicine pack – Assembly Record. The medication ampoules should be packaged appropriately and patient information leaflets enclosed in the JEMP.

The EoL medicines, community medication administration record and syringe driver chart must be packed into a pharmacy re-sealable plastic bag and placed in the JEMP. The pack should be sealed with a security tag around the handle.

The pharmacy must ensure the following labels are attached to the outside of the pack:-

- "The contents of this pack expire on" and the expiry date chosen should correspond to the earliest expiry date of the medicinal products within the pack.
- The contact details of the pharmacy department.
- The Unique JEMP identifier number (see recordkeeping).
- The pharmacy must keep a list of all packs issued and the expiry dates.

The above details must be kept securely and confidentially in the pharmacy, and copies kept for a period of five years, in line with controlled drug documentation

Record Keeping

It is good practice and a requirement for the pharmacy to keep a record of the following details:-

- The expiry date placed on the JEMP in order to monitor
- The date the pack was collected
- A unique JEMP number

The above details must be kept securely and confidentially in the pharmacy, and copies

kept for a period of five years, in line with controlled drug documentation

Patient Information Leaflet

As required by regulations, each JEMP should be provided with the medicinal product's patient information leaflets.

6.1 Clinical check/ Order form assessment

A clinical check is **not** required by the pharmacy professional supplying the JEMP to the courier. The service is to facilitate urgent medication supply in an emergency and is not a clinical service. The supplying pharmacy professional will not have access to the relevant information e.g. patient details or administration chart, to accurately perform this check. The requesting doctor is accountable for ensuring that the contents of the JEMP is suitable for the patient.

As this is an emergency service, this enables pharmacy professionals to dispense a standardised JEMP in accordance with this strict protocol and in the patient's best interest to ensure unhindered supply. By accessing the scheme, the prescriber is aware of the contents of the JEMP giving pharmacy reassurance that the supply of the JEMP is in accordance with the intention of the person issuing the order.

The supplying pharmacy professional is not accountable for errors/omissions in the order form and this should not delay supply. A follow up process should be in place to ensure any amendments to the order can be made retrospectively.

7 PATIENT and FAMILY COMPLAINTS

Pharmacy, Nursing / Medical Teams, and Practices should follow local arrangements for dealing with complaints.

8 EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Implementation of policies and procedures can only be effective if adequate evaluation and monitoring are used to check the system and ensure any shortcomings are identified and dealt with. Locally, managers are responsible for initiating an ongoing monitoring process within their area of responsibility.

From an organisational perspective the medicines management team shall be responsible for monitoring this policy and ensuring that appropriate actions are being taken to maintain patient safety.

9 IMPLEMENTATION

The **End of Life COVID-19 Medicines Service** will be implemented across Wales during

the COVID- 19 pandemic.

10 REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and is subject to change due to availability of stock.

Appendix 1

Service Outline

NHS Wales Interim EoL Medicines service during C19 Pandemic

The service is to supplement the normal service with a focus on coverage out-of-normal working hours

The EoL medicines service will deliver a JUST IN TIME group medicines agreed by the Welsh Palliative Medicine network

Process Flowchart

