

The Thames Valley LPC statement on a multi-compartment compliance aid (MCA)

The Equality Act 2010 expects all service providers to take 'reasonable steps' to anticipate the needs of those people identified within the Act. The community pharmacist must make a 'reasonable adjustment' to how medicines are supplied. This reasonable adjustment may take the form of non-child resistant tops, large print labels, medicines administration record (MAR) charts and Medicines Compliance Aids (MCAs).

Anyone can request assistance / support to take their medicines. However, as referenced by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society it is the community pharmacists' responsibility to make a professional judgement of what is an appropriate adjustment or intervention including an MCA. For many medicines, removing doses from original packaging and placing them in a multi-compartment compliance aid (MCA) will be outside the terms of the marketing authorisation (i.e., unlicensed use). Removal from packaging, therefore, transfers responsibility for stability from the manufacturer to the prescriber and pharmacist. The community pharmacist must also weigh up the capacity of the pharmacy to dispense the MCS safely.

Seven-day prescriptions should only be issued when 7-day dispensing is clinically necessary. Typically, this will be in one of two scenarios:

1. When there is a clear clinical need for restricting the quantity of medication that a patient holds at any one time e.g. concerns about overdose or misuse.
2. There are frequent changes to the medication regime - using 7-day quantities will help to minimise waste as a result of medication changes. Once stability in dose/medication choice has been achieved, moving to 28-day quantities should be considered.

In summary,

- The decision about the length of the prescription should be made by the **prescriber**
- The decision about whether to use an MCA or any other reasonable adjustment should be made by the **community pharmacist**.
- 7-day prescriptions should only be provided when there is a clear clinical need to restrict supply of medication to a patient. These prescriptions should be dispensed and supplied weekly.
- All other MCS supplies should be supplied against a 28-day prescription. These prescriptions should be dispensed and supplied on a 4-weekly basis.
- Patients that do not qualify for an MCA under the Equality Act are not to be funded via a 7-day prescription.
- Where a 7-day prescription are not agreed as necessary for patient safety, then it is a commercial decision within the pharmacy to continue providing MCA.
- Where requests are made over and above current funded or contractual obligations these must not be funded by community pharmacy (as is the current situation) but by either Social Care or the local CCG. Funding is to cover the costs of assembling the MCA, the production of a MAR sheets and delivery to the patient (if required).