



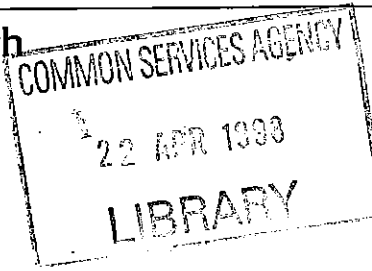
THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

Department of Health

NHS
MEL(1998)29

NHS Management Executive
St. Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

21st April 1998



Dear Colleague

REPORT ON THE SUPPLY AND ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES UNDER GROUP PROTOCOL

FIRST REPORT OF THE UK REVIEW OF PRESCRIBING, SUPPLY AND ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES

Summary

The UK Review of Prescribing, Supply and Administration of Medicines was set up in March 1997 to look at ways of making greater use of skills and experience of the various professionals working in both primary and secondary care. A first report by the Review Team concerning the supply and administration of medicines by nurses and other health professionals under group protocols is enclosed. This report:-

- sets out the Review Team's description of what a group protocol should contain;
- describes inconsistencies in current practice in group protocols;
- explains the current legal uncertainty concerning group protocols; and
- makes recommendations about current and future practice under group protocols.

Action

Health Boards and NHS Trusts are asked to:-

- note the report's recommendations, which are reproduced in the attached Annex;
- act upon recommendations 2, 4 and 5.

Addressees

For action:
General Managers,
Health Boards

Chief Executives,
NHS Trusts

For information:
Directors of Public Health
Directors of Nursing
Directors of Primary Care

Enquiries to:

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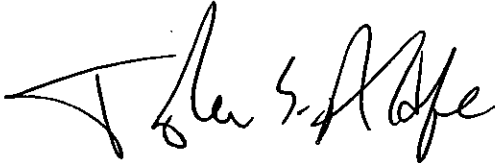
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The report is also available on the Internet, Department of Health website at <http://www.open.gov.uk/doh/protocol.htm>

NAC07803

- distribute the report to all GP practices and to the independent health sector in your Health Board area. Bulk supplies of the report will be sent to Health Boards under separate cover.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Kevin J Woods', written in a cursive style.

for DR KEVIN J WOODS
Director of Strategy and Performance Management

Background

1. The UK Review of Prescribing, Supply and Administration of Medicines was set up in March 1997 to look at ways of making greater use of the skills and experience of the various professionals working in both primary and secondary care. The Review Team comprises of 11 members and is chaired by Dr June Crown, President of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine, and Director of the South East Institute of Public Health Medicine.
2. Under its Terms of Reference, the Review Team is required to produce recommendations on the supply and administration of medicines by nurses and other health professionals under group protocols, and on any safeguards which should apply. The recommendations are reproduced in the attached Annex.
3. The legality of the arrangements under which medicines are supplied and administered under group protocols has been called into question and work is currently underway to address the legal uncertainties identified in the report. It is intended to implement any necessary legal changes as soon as possible.
4. This is the first of 2 reports by the Review Team. The second report will focus on the current arrangements for the prescribing, supply and administration of medicines (not under group protocols), and whether health professionals other than existing prescribers might take on new roles in respect of those activities. That report is expected to be published later this year.

REPORT ON SUPPLY AND ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES UNDER GROUP PROTOCOLS: RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE REVIEW TEAM

1. The majority of patients should continue to receive medicines on an individual basis. However, there is likely to be a continuing need for supply and administration under group protocols in certain limited situations as part of a comprehensive health service.
2. Current safe and effective practice using group protocols which are consistent with the criteria at Appendix A of the report should continue (see also recommendation 5).
3. The law should be clarified to ensure that health professionals who supply and administer medicines under approved group protocols are acting within the law.
4. All group protocols should comply with the criteria specified in Appendix A of the report.
5. Protocols currently in use should be reviewed immediately in the light of those criteria.
6. The criteria for group protocols should be widely disseminated by the Health Departments in association with relevant professional bodies.
7. Consideration should be given to commissioning an evaluation study of the use of group protocols, including health outcomes.
8. These recommendations should apply to all sectors of healthcare including the private and charitable sectors.



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**UK REVIEW OF PRESCRIBING, SUPPLY AND ADMINISTRATION OF
MEDICINES**

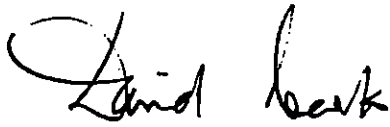
**REPORT ON THE SUPPLY AND ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES UNDER
GROUP PROTOCOLS**

I am pleased to send you a copy of the first report of the UK Review of Prescribing, Supply and Administration of Medicines. The report follows consultation last year by the team leading the Review and concerns the supply and administration of medicines under group protocols by nurses and other health professionals. It is being widely distributed within the NHS under cover of the attached Management Executive letter MEL(98)29. Copies of the report will also go to the private and charitable sectors.


Whilst the majority of patients should continue to receive medicines on an individual basis, the report acknowledges that there is likely to be a continuing need for supply and administration under group protocols in certain limited situations. Where group protocols exist they should comply with the detailed criteria set out in Appendix A of the report. As recommended by the Review Team, work is currently underway to clarify the current legal uncertainties surrounding the use of group protocols.

I hope you find this report helpful. The Review Team will be submitting a further report on other aspects of the Review later this year.

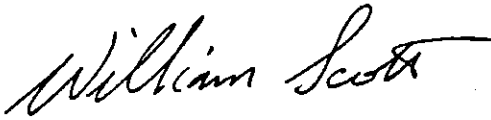
Yours sincerely



PROFESSOR SIR DAVID CARTER
Chief Medical Officer



ANNE JARVIE
Chief Nursing Officer



WILLIAM SCOTT
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer



RAY WATKINS
Chief Dental Officer