



**To: All GPs, Practice Managers and Pharmacists in Devon**

Dear Doctor/Pharmacist

**Devon LMC and Community Pharmacy Devon Position Statement On: Prescribing Periods**

In September 2012 Devon LMC and Community Pharmacy Devon released a position statement on the issue of shorter prescribing periods. However, as there are continuing concerns and misunderstandings from both prescribers and pharmacists we have taken the decision to re-release the statement.

The best practice on prescribing periods was researched in the Department of Health funded report on Waste Medicines<sup>1</sup>. In the report it stated that there are 'positive opportunities for the further reduction of medicines waste including: encouraging the flexible and informed use of 28-day (prescribing) and where (it) benefits patients either longer or shorter periods'.

The GPC advice on prescribing in primary care states that prescribing intervals should be in line with the medically appropriate needs of the patient, need to safeguard NHS resources, patient convenience and the dangers of excess drugs in the home<sup>2</sup>.

**Devon LMC and Community Pharmacy Devon would like to recommend: Shorter prescribing periods such as seven-day prescriptions should ONLY be used when there is clear clinical need or where the patient would benefit, for example where adherence to medicine regimes is an issue, or concerns of stockpiling medicines, or where there is a risk of medicine overdose.**

The dispensing of prescriptions must always be the same as the interval or quantity stated on the prescription, this means if a month's supply of a medicine is prescribed it must be dispensed monthly.

In addition, there seems to be confusion around the effect of shorter prescribing periods on the pharmacy funding budget. The community pharmacy contract is fixed and variations in prescribing periods will not change the cost to the NHS as a whole. However, shorter prescribing period prescriptions should not be used as a funding mechanism to mitigate the additional cost of dispensing medicines into monitored dosing systems/blister packs.

Both Devon LMC and Community Pharmacy Devon hope that this agreement will facilitate wider collaborative working between prescribers and pharmacy teams to support best patient care.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Taylor', written over a white background.

**Sue Taylor**  
Chief Officer, Community  
Pharmacy Devon

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Best', written over a white background.

**Dr Matt Best**  
Medical Executive  
Devon LMC

<sup>1</sup> Evaluation of the Scale, Causes and Costs of Waste Medicines, York Health Economics Consortium and School of Pharmacy University of London. 2010

<sup>2</sup> Prescribing in General Practice, GPC/BMA, 2015