

Dear Colleague

As part of the 2019-2020 Prescribing Quality Incentive Scheme, one of the targets is for the nominated practice Prescribing Lead to implement bimonthly prescribing actions within the practice, and to feedback to the Medicines Management Team.

As practices may be aware, pregabalin and gabapentin have been reclassified as schedule 3 CDs under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations as of April 2019. This is due to the rising numbers of fatalities linked to the drugs. In 2016, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) raised concerns over medicinal misuse, illegal diversion of the drugs and addiction.

For the first action of the year, April 2019, please review the following questions to confirm that prescriptions for pregabalin and gabapentin for all patients meet the following CD requirements:

- Prescriptions include dose, (which must be clearly defined; 'as directed' is not acceptable), date signed, address of the prescriber, formulation, strength (where appropriate), and total quantity or dosage units in both words and figures.
- The maximum quantity prescribed should not exceed 30 days.
- Prescribers must not issue repeatable prescriptions, therefore, discontinue repeat dispensing. This is distinct from issuing a repeat prescription, which can continue, however, it is considered good practice to not have CDs on the repeat prescription template.

Please provide feedback to the Medicines Management Team by 17th May 2019 to confirm that this review has been undertaken in your practice (prescribing.mailbox@nhs.net).

This action is also an opportunity to review prescribing of pregabalin and gabapentin for appropriateness of treatment, including dosing, and to ensure that pregabalin is prescribed cost effectively generically (rather than as a brand such as Lyrica or Alzain).

If you require any further information or advice, please do not hesitate to contact the Medicines Management Team on 01375 365811. Please report any incidents or concerns regarding CDs directly to NHS Midlands and England East CD team using the online reporting tool (<https://www.cdreporting.co.uk/>) and for any CD related advice contact the NHS England local Controlled Drug Accountable Officer (england.ea-cdao@nhs.net).