

Gabapentin and Pregabalin - Frequently Asked Questions

Gabapentin and pregabalin will become Schedule 3 Controlled Drugs in April 2019

NHS Contractor Services

Prescribers are legally permitted to be in possession of CDs and to supply them to others who are legally permitted to be in possession of CDs. This means that a doctor or non-medical prescriber who orders stock can use that stock for administration directly to a patient, can direct another person to administer to a patient or can supply to the patient for them to take at a later date.

Pharmacists can legally be in possession of CDs and can supply them to others in the situations stipulated by the law, e.g. supply from a prescription or in response to a legal requisition.

When gabapentin and pregabalin become Schedule 3 Controlled Drugs, will they need to be stored in the CD cabinet?	NO – there are no safe custody requirements for gabapentin and pregabalin.
Will records for gabapentin and pregabalin need to be kept in the CD register?	NO
What prescription writing requirements will apply on 1 st April 2019 for gabapentin and pregabalin?	<p>Gabapentin and pregabalin prescriptions must include:</p> <p>patient name and address, prescriber's name and address, prescriber's signature date drug name, strength, form, total quantity in words and figures specified dose and dosage instructions* instalment quantities must be included if to be supplied in instalments e.g. 'Dispense x tablets weekly'</p> <p>(*note 'as directed' is not acceptable; 'one as directed' is allowable)</p>
What if the prescription written on or after 1 st April 2019 does not comply with the requirements?	<p>Pharmacists are legally able to amend CD prescriptions for minor typographical errors – this includes adding the total quantity in words or figures where one of these details has been omitted (but not both). In such cases, provided the pharmacist is confident that the prescription is legitimate and unambiguous they may amend the prescription. Otherwise it will need to be amended by the prescriber.</p> <p>Dispensing practices must ensure that all prescriptions are legally compliant from 1st April 2019.</p>

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Can gabapentin and pregabalin be issued as an <u>urgent</u> supply?	NO - The current Patient Group Direction (PGD) for Urgent Provision of Repeat Prescribed Medicines (CPUS) is being reviewed. From April 2019 gabapentin and pregabalin, as a Schedule 3 CD, cannot be issued as an urgent supply by a community pharmacist.
Can gabapentin and pregabalin be issued as an <u>emergency</u> supply?	NO - Emergency supply can be at the request of a patient or a healthcare prescriber. Schedule 3 CDs cannot be supplied in an emergency, except phenobarbitone or phenobarbitone sodium for epilepsy.
Can gabapentin and pregabalin be issued on serial prescriptions?	NO - From 1 st April 2019 gabapentin and pregabalin, as a Schedule 3 CD, cannot be issued as a serial prescription.
What should be done about current serial prescriptions containing gabapentin and pregabalin?	A new gabapentin and/or pregabalin prescription must be issued. Gabapentin and pregabalin should be removed from the serial prescription system. Patients should be informed of the changes and the implications for obtaining future supplies.
Can pharmacists dispense a gabapentin and pregabalin prescription for more than 30 days supply?	YES – it is a good practice requirement that CD prescriptions should be for a maximum of 30 days. This is however not a legal requirement. Prescribers should review quantities and reduce, documenting in patient notes the circumstances where they wish to continue to supply >30 days quantity. Prescribers who prescribe more than a 30 day supply should be prepared to justify their decision.
Can gabapentin and pregabalin be supplied in a dosette box or be dispensed on a weekly basis?	YES – however as a Schedule 3 CD with prescribing writing requirements, and the prescription will have to comply with instalment requirements –i.e. the quantity to be supplied at each instalment must be stated as well as the interval to be observed.
How long is a gabapentin and pregabalin prescription valid for?	28 days – from 1 st April 2019 gabapentin and pregabalin prescriptions will be valid for 28 days from the date signed, or the appropriate date if specified.
Can pharmacists dispense a balance for gabapentin and pregabalin after 28 days?	NO – all balances must be dispensed within the 28 days validity period.

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Is an instalment prescription for gabapentin and pregabalin that lasts for longer than 28 days allowable?	YES – the first instalment must be dispensed within the 28 day period, after that the following instalments can be dispensed after the 28 day period.
How should a GP order gabapentin and pregabalin?	GP10A – however this should be on a separate GP10A from other non-CDs. This completed GP10A must be submitted to PSD and the pharmacy should keep a copy of the original requisition.
How should a doctor order stock for private business?	For private requisitions for Schedule 2 and 3 CDs, a standard form has been designed (CDRF) which will carry the same security features as NHS and private CD prescription forms, including a unique serial number. Prescribers must apply to the Health Board to register and for supplies. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. if an individual has difficulty accessing CDRFs, a CD can be supplied in response to an order written on a nonstandard form providing all the legal requirements are met. This completed requisition must be submitted to PSD and the pharmacy should keep a copy of the original requisition.
Can a prescriber issue a private prescription for gabapentin and pregabalin on headed note paper?	NO – from 1 st April 2019 as a Schedule 3 CD, gabapentin and pregabalin must be written on PPCD (private prescription controlled drugs) prescription pad if it is being supplied as a private prescription.
Can a patient's representative collect gabapentin and pregabalin for them?	YES
What needs to be recorded by the pharmacy when a gabapentin and pregabalin prescription is collected?	The patient/representative should be asked to sign the back of the prescription form stating they have collected the CD item.
Can pharmacists dispense a prescription for gabapentin and pregabalin written by a doctor from outside the UK?	No – the address of the prescriber must be within the UK for schedule 3 CDs.
How should I destroy out of date/no longer required stock of gabapentin and pregabalin or patient- returned gabapentin and pregabalin?	Schedule 3 CDs must be denatured before disposal – denaturing kits are recommended followed by disposal in pharmaceutical waste bin. Destruction does not need to be witnessed by Authorised Witness. No records need to be kept in the CD register.

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NHS Managed Sector

The legislation for supply of CDs within a ward or department is different from the legislation for ordering by prescribers. A nurse can only order CDs for the treatment of patients within that ward or department. This means that ward stocks cannot be given to patients to take when they leave; an individual prescription must be generated for each patient.

Can gabapentin and pregabalin be supplied on 'top-up' for wards/departments?	NO – as a schedule 3 CD gabapentin and pregabalin must be written as a requisition. Top-up/routine order sheets do not comply with this. Gabapentin and pregabalin orders must comply with requisition requirements, i.e. signed by authorised signatory for that clinical area when ordered, signed by pharmacy at point of supply and specify drug name, strength, form and quantity. Copy must be kept by pharmacy.
Must gabapentin and pregabalin be ordered on a CD order book?	Board areas will have local arrangements to ensure legal compliance with the requisition requirements as above.
When gabapentin and pregabalin are Schedule 3 Controlled Drugs will they need to be stored in the CD cabinet?	NO – there are no safe custody requirements for gabapentin and pregabalin – they can still be stored in ward stock cupboards (unless local arrangements are in place)
Will records for gabapentin and pregabalin need to be kept in CD register?	NO – (unless local arrangements are in place)
Can gabapentin and pregabalin be supplied directly to patients from ward/department pre-labelled (TTO) stocks?	NO – gabapentin and pregabalin as schedule 3 CD cannot be supplied directly to patients without a legal prescription. This applies to all wards/departments within the managed service including casualty departments.
What are the legal requirements for a gabapentin and pregabalin discharge prescription?	Gabapentin and pregabalin prescriptions must state: Patient name and address, prescriber's name and address, be dated and signed and specify the drug name, strength, form, total quantity in words & figures and the dose (note 'as directed' is not acceptable but 'one as directed' is allowable).
Can nursing staff still administer gabapentin and pregabalin from ward stock to a patient if it is prescribed on their Prescription and Administration record (kardex)?	YES
Can gabapentin and pregabalin be included on a Patient Group Direction (PGD)?	NO – the only schedule 3 CD allowable on PGD is midazolam.

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How should casualty departments or day surgery units supply gabapentin and pregabalin to patients?	There must be a written prescription signed by a doctor or non-medical prescriber. Any prescription must comply with prescription writing requirements and is recommended to be for a maximum of 30 days supply. Options include a prescription to be dispensed by the hospital pharmacy or to be dispensed by community pharmacy (HBP pad).
How should gabapentin and pregabalin that is out of date be destroyed within hospital wards/departments?	Follow local arrangements for other schedule 3 controlled drugs

Out of Hours Service

Can gabapentin and pregabalin be supplied directly to patients from doctors/nurse practitioner out of hours/emergency bag or centre stocks?	YES – doctors/non-medical prescribers are allowed to possess and supply schedule 3 CD to patients.
Can gabapentin and pregabalin be held in emergency bag/centre stock cupboards?	YES – there are no CD storage requirements and any issue is by doctor/nurse practitioner
How should gabapentin and pregabalin be ordered for out of hours/emergency bag or centre stocks?	<p>Top up orders will not be allowed – orders must comply with requisition requirements. Board areas will have local arrangements to ensure legal compliance – i.e. signed by doctor when ordered, signed by pharmacy at point of supply and specify drug name, strength, form and quantity. Copy must be kept by pharmacy.</p> <p>Local arrangements for top up from rural casualty departments will become illegal for gabapentin and pregabalin as of 10th June.</p>
Will records for gabapentin and pregabalin need to be kept in CD register?	NO
What prescription writing requirements will apply in April 2019 for gabapentin and pregabalin?	<p>Gabapentin and pregabalin prescriptions must state:</p> <p>Patient name and address, prescriber's name and address, be dated and signed and specify the drug name, strength, form, total quantity in words & figures and the dose (note 'as directed' is not acceptable but 'one as directed' is allowable).</p>

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Prison Service

How should gabapentin and pregabalin be ordered for the prison service?	Pregabalin and gabapentin should be ordered via the approved requisition forms used by the current pharmaceutical service provider—a separate form should be used for each strength/formulation of gabapentin and pregabalin required. Board areas will have local arrangements to ensure legal compliance – i.e. signed by appropriate practitioner,
When gabapentin and pregabalin is a schedule 3 controlled drug will it need to be stored in the CD cabinet?	NO – there are no safe custody requirements for gabapentin and pregabalin – it can still be stored in health centre stock cupboards (unless local arrangements)
Will records for gabapentin and pregabalin need to be kept in CD register?	NO - (unless local arrangements) however it is recommended that stock balances are maintained to account for stock movement and administration is recorded in the patient administration record (kardex)
Can prisoners have gabapentin and pregabalin as an 'in-possession' medication?	NO – due to the risks of diversion gabapentin and pregabalin should be administered by health centre staff.