

## Brief Guide to Issuing a 'Just in Case' Drug Box

### 1. Patient identified as being suitable for a drug box:

- Known terminal illness – cancer or non-cancer
- Expressed wish to remain at home
- Prognosis probably 3 months or less – notoriously unpredictable, and if we do not think or plan ahead there will inevitably be occasions when crisis occurs. *Plan ahead* - use clinical judgement and intuition.

### 2. Discuss drug box and purpose with the patient – give them a **patient leaflet** ('Guide to Just in Case box'). <http://www.telfordccg.nhs.uk/who-we-are/publications/publications/medicines-management/palliative-care-boxes>

### 3. GP issues prescription for all of the drugs included in the emergency just in case box. This is done within the patient record on the practice computer, using the **Emergency 'just in case' Medicines Box Feb 2015** EMIS protocol.<sup>1</sup> This creates a contemporaneous, read coded and auditable record of the drugs being issued, is simple and saves time and prescription errors. Try to avoid handwriting prescriptions- they are not auditable and there is a large potential for error.

**Diamorphine 10mg Injection "10mg to be administered for pain as directed" 5 ampoules**  
**Hyoscine Butylbromide 20mg/ml Injection 4 ampoules.**  
**Levomepromazine 25mg/ml Injection 2 ampoules.**  
**Midazolam 10mg/2ml Injection 4 ampoules.**  
**Water for Injection BP 10ml 5 ampoules.**

### 4. Discuss prescription with nominated pharmacist – a list of participating pharmacies can be found in the Medicines Management section of the T&W website <http://www.telfordccg.nhs.uk/who-we-are/publications/publications/medicines-management/palliative-care-boxes>

*NB. Please allow pharmacist at least 48 hours' notice if possible – this is not something that can be done in a lunch break!*

### 5. The General Practice is responsible for issuing prescriptions for the emergency medicines box along with a completed patient specific direction (PSD) for its use. The practice should then contact the chosen approved community pharmacy and arrange for the prescription and the PSD to reach the pharmacy.

The completed emergency 'just in case' box along with the PSD should either be collected by the patient or their nominated representative and this process will be arranged by the pharmacy. The box could be delivered to the patient's home using the pharmacy's delivery service where available.

*The box should not/cannot be stored at the pharmacy once it has been issued for an individual patient.*

### 6. Ensure that the patient is flagged to Shropdoc, that the presence of a 'Just in Case' box is identified, and that the patient/carer knows the purpose of the box and where it is stored.

### 7. **If the box is used** – the audit sheet in the plastic pouch attached to the box **must** be completed by the doctor or nurse who administers any drug from the box. The audit sheet must then be placed back in the plastic pouch. Completion of the audit sheet is vital to tracking the usage of the medicines.

### 8. When a box needs refilling, the practice should contact the pharmacy by telephone to allow the pharmacy time to arrange collection or delivery of both the prescription from the practice and the box from the patient's home. The pharmacy may arrange for a relative to deliver the box to the pharmacy or collect the box directly from the patient's home if they operate a delivery service and it is feasible to do so.

### 9. *After the patient's death the box and its contents must be returned to the issuing pharmacist.* This is the responsibility of the patient's representative. It is recognised that this will not be a high priority for the patient's family/carer and it would be helpful if Community Nurses can remind the family/carer of the importance of this.

<sup>1</sup> See note 1

## Note 1

1. Open the patient record
2. Select 'add a consultation'
3. Press F12 – protocol launcher will appear on the right side of the screen
4. Select **Emergency 'just in case' Medicines Box Feb 2015** EMIS protocol
5. Option will appear asking "Do you want to issue ALL medication for 'just in case palliative care box'?"  
For the first issue of just in case box select YES to issue ALL drugs. The protocol will then take you through each drug in turn with the option to 'approve & complete'.

To re-issue drugs which have been used from the just in case box, at **step 5** above select NO to issue ALL drugs, you will then have the option to select only the drugs required to re-issue the box.

The prescription will be recorded in the patient's medication history and the episode Read coded.

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