

15 October 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Proposals for more efficient and responsive access to medicines for patients

On behalf of the four nations, NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently leading public consultations on proposals that include changes to medicines responsibilities for eight regulated health professions, as follows:

- Enabling dental hygienists and dental therapists to supply and administer certain medicines under exemptions within medicines legislation
- Enabling biomedical scientists, clinical scientists and operating department practitioners to supply and administer medicines using patient group directions
- Amending the current lists of controlled drugs that podiatrist and physiotherapist independent prescribers are legally able to prescribe
- Amending the list of medicines that paramedics can administer in emergency situations using exemptions.

Changes to UK-wide medicines legislation are required to enable all the above proposals.

The Human Medicines Regulations apply UK-wide so changes to them will apply across the four countries; for those proposals which involve controlled drugs, changes to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations are also required. The Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 apply only to England, Wales and Scotland; the Misuse of Drugs (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2002 will need to be amended separately and this will be for consideration by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland.

The benefits that are applicable to all the proposals include:

- Patients will receive timely access to the medicines they need from the most appropriate health professional – this results in improved patient experience and outcomes.
- Reduction of the need for patients to attend additional appointments or consultations with other prescribers such as a doctor, dentist, or GP just to access the medicines they need.
- Enhanced patient safety through clearer lines of responsibility and accountability for decisions made regarding medicines.
- Effective use of the knowledge and skills of the professions involved.

In partnership with the devolved administrations, the Department of Health and Social Care, and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, we have gone live with the consultations for the eight professions.

We would like to hear your thoughts on the proposals, and you can share those by completing the online questionnaires which are available via the NHS England's consultation hub (www.engage.england.nhs.uk). The consultation for each proposal will run for eight weeks and close on **10th December 2020**. The consultation documents are published on the NHS England website and can be found at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines-2/chief-professions-officers-medicines-mechanisms-programme/>.

Yours sincerely,



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Chief Allied Health Professions Officer (England)

Supporting NHS England and NHS Improvement, Health Education England and the Department of Health and Social Care



Allied Health Professions are: art therapists, dramatherapists, music therapists, chiropodists/podiatrists, dietitians, occupational therapists, operating department practitioners, orthoptists, osteopaths, prosthetists and orthotists, paramedics, physiotherapists, diagnostic radiographers, therapeutic radiographers, speech and language therapists.

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