

Public Health Link

From the Chief Medical Officer for Wales

Distribution:	As Appendix 2
From:	Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, Andrew Evans
Date:	14 March 2019
Reference:	CEM/CPhA/2019/6a
Category:	For Action (within 48 hours)
Title:	Rescheduling of Gabapentin and Pregabalin as Schedule 3 Controlled Drugs
For Action by:	<p>General Practitioners - please ensure this message is seen by all working in your dispensary and retain a copy in your 'locum information pack'.</p> <p>Independent prescribers in primary care</p> <p>Secondary care prescribers</p> <p>Community Pharmacists</p> <p>Chief Pharmacists</p> <p>Hospital pharmacists</p>
For Information:	See Annex 2 – Distribution List
What is this about:	Full details are set out below.
Why has it been sent:	For your information, action and to pass on to colleagues.

Issue:

Rescheduling of Gabapentin and Pregabalin as Schedule 3 Controlled Drugs.

The legal classification of medicines containing pregabalin and gabapentin is changing. From **1 April 2019**, medicines containing pregabalin and gabapentin are being re-classified as controlled drugs under the Misuse of Drugs of Regulations 2001 as amended.

Please read and action as attached letter from the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer.

Prif Swyddog Fferyllol
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

14 March 2019

Dear colleague,

Rescheduling of medicines containing pregabalin and gabapentin as controlled drugs

1. On 1 April, medicines containing gabapentin and pregabalin will be reclassified as Schedule 3 controlled drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001, and as Class C drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Reclassification has implications for prescribers and dispensers of these medicines which are set out below.

Implications for prescribers

2. In addition to the normal prescription requirements for prescription only medicines (as required by the Human Medicines Regulations 2012), prescriptions for Schedule 3 controlled drugs must also include the:

- Dose (which must be clearly defined; 'as directed' is not acceptable);
- Date on which the prescription was signed;
- Address of the prescriber;
- Pharmaceutical form;
- Strength (where appropriate);
- Total quantity or dosage units of the preparation in both words and figures; and
- An appropriate date. Prescriptions are valid for 28 days after the appropriate date which is either the date on which the prescription was signed or another date annotated by the prescriber on the prescription, as the date before which the drug should not be supplied; whichever is the later.

3. Prescribers may not issue repeatable (or 'batch') prescriptions for schedule 3 controlled drugs. This is distinct from issuing repeat prescriptions, which can continue to be authorised and issued at intervals of up to 28 days. In Wales, prescribers may issue instalment prescriptions for medicines containing pregabalin or gabapentin using the WP10MDA-SS (single sheet) and WP10MDA (pad) forms.

Implications for dispensers (pharmacies and dispensing doctors)

4. From 1 April 2019, it will be illegal to supply medicines containing pregabalin or gabapentin through repeat ('batch') dispensing, even if the prescription has a date which is prior to April 2019.
5. Prescriptions for medicines containing gabapentin and pregabalin can only be dispensed if they comply with the requirements set out in misuse of drugs regulations. Any prescription not meeting these requirements will be illegal and the patient will require a new prescription in order to receive a supply.
6. Any supply outstanding from prescriptions first dispensed before 1 April cannot be issued unless the prescription meets the requirements for schedule 3 controlled drugs and the outstanding supply is made within 28 days of the appropriate date. Any outstanding supplies relating to prescriptions not meeting these requirements will need to be returned to stock and prescriptions annotated accordingly when sent to the NHS Shared Services Partnership for payment. Between now and 1 April, patients should be advised of this situation before a prescription is dispensed if the ordered quantity cannot be supplied at the time of first dispensing.
7. When collecting medicines containing pregabalin or gabapentin, it is good practice to ask the patient or their representative to sign the reverse of the prescription form and to provide proof of identity before the medicines are supplied. There is no requirement to make controlled drug register entries in respect of supplies of schedule 3 controlled drugs.
8. From 1 April, emergency supplies of medicines containing gabapentin or pregabalin are not permitted. This includes any supplies under the national emergency medicines supply service commissioned by Local Health Boards.
9. The destruction of patient returns and out of date and obsolete stock will need to be carried out in line with Schedule 3 controlled drugs regulations.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Evans
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer/Prif Swyddog Fferyllol
Welsh Government/Llywodraeth Cymru

Appendix 1

- To: Chief Executives of Health Boards and NHS Trusts
- To: Medical Directors of Health Boards
- To: Nurse Directors Health Boards
- To: Directors of Public Health
- To: Hospital Principals and Chief Pharmacists to action as per alert

To: **NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership to forward to:**

All General practitioners - please ensure this message is seen by all practice nurses and non-principals working in your practice and retain a copy in your 'locum information pack'.

All Community Pharmacists

Deputising services

HB Prescribing Advisers

Independent/Private clinics and Hospitals and Hospices throughout Wales