

## **Guidance on Turning Point instalment prescriptions for Controlled Drugs**

Schedule 2 and 3 controlled drugs prescriptions, such as those for methadone and buprenorphine, are valid for 28 days after the ‘**appropriate date**’ on the prescription. The appropriate date as defined in the legislation is:

**“The later of the date on which it was signed by the person issuing it or the date indicated by him as being the date before which it shall not be supplied”<sup>1</sup>**

The ‘appropriate date’ needs to be identified by the pharmacist. The following should help:

- **“Date on which it was signed by the person issuing it” (Signature date):** This is the date that the prescription was signed, which is recorded next to the signature box. Legally the date of signing must be stated. For ‘regular’ CD prescriptions (i.e. not instalment prescriptions) this is often the only date on the prescription and therefore becomes the appropriate date.
- **“Date indicated by him as being the date before which it shall not be supplied”:** The Medicines Ethics and Practice (MEP Edition 40; page 111, RPS, July 2016) confirms this in advice given to pharmacists:

*‘The appropriate date is either the signature date or **any other date indicated on the prescription (by the prescriber) as a date before which the drugs should not be supplied – whichever is later**’.*

The MEP also states (p113):

- *‘The first instalment must be dispensed within 28 days of the appropriate date. The remainder of the instalments should be dispensed in accordance with the instructions (even if this runs beyond 28 days after the appropriate date)’.*

As Turning Point instalment prescriptions have the dates of supply stated on them, the signature date is not in such cases the ‘appropriate date’. At Turning Point most repeat instalment prescriptions are produced in advance of the first date of treatment and therefore the Turning Point prescriber will likely have written a signature date that is before the date of the first instalment<sup>2</sup>. Instalment prescriptions (FP10MDA) produced using Turning Point software; have the dispensing schedule stated in a grid format.

**The date that the first instalment is to be given on is, therefore, the ‘appropriate date’.**

The example over the page may also help:

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<sup>1</sup> Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1450 Dangerous Drugs, England and Wales, Dangerous Drugs, Scotland The Misuse of Drugs (Amendment No.2) Regulations 2006

<sup>2</sup> It is the practice of some prescribers to date the signature date the same date as the day of the first instalment. Although not illegal, this is not strictly a record of the signature date if it was signed in advance and for indemnity purposes may be seen to not reflect an accurate record of the prescription generation process.

Methadone mixture (1mg/ml)  
 Supervise consumption on days of collection  
 Daily: 50 (Fifty) ml  
 Total: 700 (Seven-Hundred) ml  
 From: 10 Sep 2013 To: 23 Sep 2013

Date	Dispense	Dose	Date	Dispense	Dose
Tue, 10 Sep	50 ml	50 ml	Tue, 17 Sep	50 ml	50 ml
Wed, 11 Sep	50 ml	50 ml	Wed, 18 Sep	50 ml	50 ml
Thu, 12 Sep	50 ml	50 ml	Thu, 19 Sep	50 ml	50 ml
Fri, 13 Sep	50 ml	50 ml	Fri, 20 Sep	50 ml	50 ml
Sat, 14 Sep	50 ml	50 ml	Sat, 21 Sep	50 ml	50 ml
Sun, 15 Sep	50 ml	50 ml	Sun, 22 Sep	50 ml	50 ml
Mon, 16 Sep	50 ml	50 ml	Mon, 23 Sep	50 ml	50 ml

INSTALLMENTS DUE ON DAYS WHEN THE PHARMACY IS CLOSED SHOULD BE DISPENSED ON THE DAY IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO CLOSURE

Notes:

Signature of Prescriber: *Dr Gordon Morse*  
 Dr Gordon Morse  
 GMC No. 1350689

Date: 22/8/13

Here is an example of an instalment grid printed on a Turning Point instalment prescription. In this example the 'signature date' is 22/8/13 because that was the date when this repeat prescription was authorised by the prescriber. However the 'appropriate date' is Tuesday 10 September. The first instalment must be supplied within 28 days of 10 September, however as the instructions for supply are clear, the prescription would be supplied as stated on the grid as this makes the prescriber's intentions unequivocal. Although the instalments run beyond 28 days from the signature date, this prescription is legal for the reasons stated above. Note the wording below the grid allows for advance supply on any dates of closure.

Note that some other prescription generation software, not used by Turning Point, does not state dates of each instalment only the date of the first supply. This is legal as long as the interval between each instalment is clear. The dose and instalment quantity are also needed.

### Starting scripts on pharmacy closed days – an alternative “appropriate date”

We aim, where appropriate, to make the first day of a prescription a week day, and try to avoid Mondays *if possible*. This is to avoid confusion over bank holidays. There have been some difficulties when the first day of supply is a mid-week bank holiday.

We are therefore asking our prescribers to state an **alternative ‘appropriate date’** on prescriptions where the grid states the first instalment is due on a closed day this coming Christmas period.

So for example, if the first instalment is due on Tuesday 27 December 2016 (a bank holiday) the prescriber must write on the prescription:

- **‘Supply the dose due on 27/12/16 on 24/12/16’.**

**As a date is clearly “indicated” for dispensing that is before the first instalment date but after the signature date this then becomes the “appropriate date” under the legislation providing the “signature date” is on or before 24/12/2016.**

Where more than one dose should be supplied this should be clearly indicated also. For example, if the first instalment date is Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2016 (a bank holiday) the prescriber must write on the prescription:

- **“Supply doses due on 26/12/16 and 27/12/2016 on 24/12/2016”**

The presence of the Home Office approved wording ‘Please dispense instalments due on pharmacy closed days on a prior suitable day’ ensures that supplies of the dose or doses due on the closure day(s) on the remainder of the prescription can be made in advance.

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