

# How to produce a Medicines Policy for care homes

Version 1.1

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Document produced by: Care Home Medicines Optimisation Team,  
NHS Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board (BLMK ICB)

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## Version Control

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Version	Date	Reviewer (s)	Revision Description
Version 1.0	July 2023	BLMK ICB Care Home Medicines Optimisation Team	New guidance document
Version 1.1	April 2025	BLMK ICB Care Home Medicines Optimisation Team	<p>Updated links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BLMK ICB Medication Room Refrigerator Temperature Management</li> <li>- BLMK ICB Good Practice Guidance for Care Homes – Expiry Dates for Medication</li> <li>- BLMK ICB Covert administration guidance for care homes</li> <li>- Adult Social Care training offer – Tier 2 Flyer</li> </ul> <p>Added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BLMK ICB Overt administration of medication – Quick Reference Guide for care homes</li> <li>- Link for Controlled Drug Accountable Officer (CDAO) regional contacts</li> <li>- Link for Local Police CD Liaison</li> </ul>

#### Committee where guidance was discussed/approved/ratified

Committee/Group	Date	Status
BLMK Primary Care Prescribing committee	14/10/2021	Approved Version 1.0
BLMK Primary Care Prescribing committee	17/04/2025	Approved Version 1.1

#### Responsibilities

All staff responsible for producing a medicines policy for care homes must understand the requirements before designing and writing the policy.

## How to produce a Medicines Policy for care homes

Care home providers should have a medicines policy in place to ensure the safe and effective use of medicines. This is a recommendation made by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) in its guideline on 'Managing medicines in care homes', Social Care Guideline [SC1] which can be accessed [here](#). The medicines policy should be regularly reviewed to make sure it is up to date and based on current legislation and the best available evidence.

The medicines policy should reflect the day-to-day activities in the care home and should be followed by every member of staff undertaking these activities. This guide is to assist care homes in gathering information required to write or update their policy.

### The policy should be current and specific to the home and should include:

- The name of the home
- The name of the person (or organisation details) who wrote the policy
- The name and signature of the responsible person in the home who implements the policy
- The date the policy was written and review date
- An index sheet and numbered pages (optional)
- Staff signing sheet or auditable electronic method to ensure each staff member has read, understood, and will work to the medicines policy

A medicines policy should include written processes for the areas suggested in the box below. This list is based on the [NICE 'Checklist for health and social care staff developing and updating a care home medicines policy'](#). The checklist supports with implementing the [NICE guideline on managing medicines in care homes](#).

### Areas to be covered in a care home medicines policy (click links below)

- [Supporting residents to make informed decisions and recording these decisions](#)
- [Sharing information about a resident's medicines e.g., transfer between care settings](#)
- [Ensuring that records are accurate and up to date](#)
- [Identifying, reporting and reviewing medicines-related problems](#)
- [Keeping residents safe \(safeguarding\)](#)
- [Accurately listing a resident's medicines \(medicines reconciliation\)](#)
- [Reviewing medicines \(medication review\)](#)
- [Ordering medicines](#)
- [Receiving, storing and disposing of medicines](#)
- [Helping residents to look after and take their medicines themselves \(self-administration\)](#)
- [Care home staff administering medicines to residents, including staff training and competence requirements](#)
- [Care home staff giving medicines to residents without their knowledge \(covert administration\)](#)
- [Care home staff giving non-prescription and over the counter products \(homely remedies\) to residents, if appropriate](#)

Some care homes may obtain a 'ready-made' medicines policy from a commercial company. If this is the case or, if your care home head office provides your policy, please check carefully to ensure the policy includes descriptions of how actual practice within your individual care homes takes place. This may be in the form of appendices attached at the end of the policy.

Section	Guidance and Resources (click on links below)
Sharing information about a resident's medicines e.g., transfer between care settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hospital passport (if available)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">A guide to confidentiality in health and social care (nationalarchives.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PrescQIPP – Transfer of care around medicines</a></li> </ul>
Ensuring that records are accurate and up to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Medicines administration records in adult social care - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Electronic medicines administration records (eMAR) in adult social care - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Working with external healthcare professionals - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Records Management Code of Practice - NHS Transformation Directorate (england.nhs.uk)</a></li> </ul>
Identifying, reporting, and reviewing medicines-related problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Care Homes: Falls Documents – BLMKICB Medicines Management</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reporting medicine related incidents - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Controlled Drug Reporting website</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Controlled Drug Accountable Officer (CDAO) Contacts</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Local Police CD Liaison Officer</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Patient Safety Alerts in adult social care – Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CAS – Home (mhra.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">To register for CAS alerts contact the helpdesk via email: <a href="mailto:safetyalerts@mhra.gov.uk">safetyalerts@mhra.gov.uk</a></a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Yellow Card   Making medicines and medical devices safer (mhra.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PrescQIPP – Refused or missed doses briefing sheet</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PrescQIPP – Assisting people with swallowing difficulties</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Electronic Medicines Compendium (EMC) for Patient Information Leaflets (PILs)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">British National Formulary (BNF) online</a></li> </ul>
Keeping residents safe (safeguarding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Overview   Safeguarding adults in care homes   Guidance   NICE</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PrescQIPP – Safeguarding and medicines briefing sheet</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Creating a safeguarding culture   Quick guides to social care topics   Social care   NICE Communities   About   NICE</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Good practice in safeguarding training   Quick guides to social care topics   Social care   NICE Communities   About   NICE</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Local Authority Safeguarding teams (click on locality):</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="#">Bedford Borough Council</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="#">Central Bedfordshire Council</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="#">Luton Borough Council</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="#">Milton Keynes Council</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Accurately listing a resident's medicines (medicines reconciliation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Medicines reconciliation - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> </ul>
Reviewing medicines (medication review)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NHS England » Structured medication reviews and medicines optimisation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Appropriate use of psychotropic medicines in adult social care - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Time sensitive medicines - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">High risk medicines: clozapine - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">High risk medicines: valproate - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Care Homes: Falls Documents – BLMKICB Medicines Management</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">End of Life Care Medicine Services – BLMKICB Medicines Management</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">2020-AKI-for-Care-Homes.pdf (thinkkidneys.nhs.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Emollients and risk of severe and fatal burns: new resources available - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Safe use of emollient skin creams to treat dry skin conditions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Dysphagia and thickeners - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> </ul>
Ordering medicines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Care Home Medicines Optimisation Team (MOT) SystmOne Proxy ordering – BLMKICB Medicines Management</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">NHS England » Ordering medication using proxy access: Guidance for care homes, GP practices and community pharmacies</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">End of Life Care Medicine Services – BLMKICB Medicines Management</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Effective record keeping and ordering of medicines   Quick guides to social care topics   Social care   NICE Communities   About   NICE</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PrescQIPP – Prescribing, ordering and receiving medicines in care homes</a></li> </ul>
Receiving, storing and disposing of medicines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">BLMK ICB Meds room and refrigerator temperature guide for care homes.pdf (icb.nhs.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">BLMK ICB Good Practice Guidance for Care Homes – Expiry Dates for Medication</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PrescQIPP – Prescribing, ordering and receiving medicines in care homes</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Storing medicines in care homes - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Storing medicines in fridges in care homes - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Disposing of medicines - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Controlled drugs in care homes - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> </ul>
Helping residents to look after and take their medicines themselves (self-administration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Self administered medicines in care homes - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PrescQIPP – self administration of medication briefing</a></li> </ul>
Care home staff administering medicines to residents, including staff training and competence requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">BLMK ICB Care Home Medicines Optimisation team - Adult Social Care training offers</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Training and competence for medicines optimisation in adult social care - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">BLMK ICB “When Required” (PRN Medication) – Guidance for Care Homes</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">When required medicines in adult social care – Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Delegating medicines administration - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PrescQIPP - Medicines administration in care homes</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Medicines care plans - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Time sensitive medicines - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reporting medicine related incidents - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PrescQIPP – Refused or missed doses briefing sheet</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PrescQIPP – Assisting people with swallowing difficulties</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Controlled drugs in care homes - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External medicines such as creams and patches - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</li> <li>• Enteral feeding and medicines administration - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</li> </ul>
Care home staff giving medicines to residents without their knowledge (covert administration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLMK ICB Covert Administration Guidance for care homes</li> <li>• Covert administration of medicines - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</li> <li>• PrescQIPP – Covert administration of medication – Bulletin 269</li> <li>• Giving medicines covertly   Quick guides to social care topics   Social care   NICE Communities   About   NICE</li> <li>• BLMK ICB <u>Overt</u> administration of medication – Quick Reference Guide for care homes</li> </ul>
Care home staff giving non-prescription and over-the-counter products to residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLMK ICB Homely Remedies Toolkit and First Dressings Scheme</li> <li>• BLMK ICB Self Care Tool Kit for Care homes</li> <li>• Over the counter medicines and homely remedies - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)</li> <li>• PrescQIPP – Care Homes Homely remedies – Bulletin 335</li> </ul>

The BLMK ICB Care Home Medicines Optimisation team have listed some of our up-to-date guidance documents under selected sections above to support you and your staff. These are also available on our care homes website page [here](#).

#### **Further information/reading:**

We have also included in the sections above links to resources produced by PrescQIPP. These may require care home registration and login, for access to the site click [here](#).

PrescQIPP have produced a bulletin for care home staff on how care homes can implement NICE guidelines: [305. Implementing NICE and SIGN guidelines in care homes 2.0 \(prescqipp.info\)](#)

#### **BLMK ICB Care Home Medicines Optimisation team contact details:**

Bedford and Central Bedfordshire: [blmkicb.bedsnocarehometeam@nhs.net](mailto:blmkicb.bedsnocarehometeam@nhs.net)

Luton: [blmkicb.lutoncarehometeam@nhs.net](mailto:blmkicb.lutoncarehometeam@nhs.net)

Milton Keynes: [blmkicb.mkcarehomespharmacy@nhs.net](mailto:blmkicb.mkcarehomespharmacy@nhs.net)

***Please note: all guidance/links are correct at the time of publication***

**Acknowledgment:** We would like to thank NHS Devon 'Caring for care homes' team for allowing us to use their guidance sheet 'How to write a medicines policy'.