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The role of the Medicines Optimisation Care Setting Team:

- Promote cost effective prescribing and safe use of medicines in order to prevent errors/incidents and harms related to medicines.
- Provide medicines management-related information, advice, guidance & resources to support good quality, person centred, safe medicines management.
- Enable care setting colleagues, through programmes of training and support, to manage medicines with confidence.

Supporting Safe Hospital Admissions: What to Send with Individuals

When a person is admitted to hospital, ensuring the right information and medication travels with them is vital for their safety and continuity of care.

To support accurate [medicines reconciliation](#) and avoid any missed doses, please make sure the following are sent with the individual:

- **All current medicines** belonging to the person
- A copy of the **current MAR chart**
- Other relevant documents, e.g. the **Patient Passport**

Important:

Please do not send medicines in multi-compartment compliance aids (e.g., MDS or Dosette boxes), as hospitals are unable to use them. This can cause delays or complications with medication administration.

Thank you for helping ensure residents receive safe and timely care during hospital admissions.

Good Practice Guide for Medicines Ordering in Care Homes

This month sees the launch of the [Good Practice Guide for Medicines Ordering in Care Homes](#).

This guide outlines best practice for ordering and prescribing to ensure timely, accurate and safe medication supply for care home residents. A collaborative approach between care home staff, GP practice/PCN teams, and community pharmacies is essential for an effective medication ordering process. The guide is also shared across the system with providers **including GP Practices, PCN teams and Community Pharmacy teams.**

Health Innovation Network Resources



includes a **Safely Stopping your Medicine** leaflet for residents, staff and relatives.

The Health Innovation Network has provided a freely downloadable set of [care home resources](#) to support patients having a Structured Medication Review (SMR). It

Medequip Amnesty

Telford-based [Medequip](#) are commissioned to provide the Shropshire Community Equipment Loan Service across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. Please help your local council and NHS services by returning any equipment no longer needed. A simple [flow chart](#) of the process is provided on their website.



Social Prescribing: Supporting Health Beyond Medicine

Social prescribers help people manage life's challenges - such as stress, isolation or financial issues - by offering time, support, and a listening ear. As part of NHS efforts to improve access to care, link workers have joined general practice teams where they will support wellbeing beyond medical treatment by taking a whole-person approach.

Social prescribing is available to everyone, especially those with long-term conditions, mental health needs, social isolation, complex circumstances, or those making frequent GP visits without clear outcomes. Connections are made to local services, groups, and activities, helping individuals lead healthier lives while reducing pressure on GP services.

In Shropshire, people can self-refer by phoning 0345 678 9028 or e-mailing healthylives@shropshire.gov.uk with the subject line 'social prescribing self-referral'.

People can also get help by asking any member of staff at their GP practice for a referral. Referrals can be made by other services and providers including the care sector:

- [Shropshire's social prescribing services.](#)

In Telford and Wrekin, Telford Mind and Teldoc both provide social prescribing services. People can also ask for a social prescribing referral from any member of staff at their GP practice.

- [Telford Mind's social prescribing services.](#)
- [Teldoc's social prescribing services.](#)



NHS England – Midland Team Controlled Drugs newsletter Please take a look at the [NHS England – Midland Team Controlled Drugs newsletter](#).

This issue covers important updates, best practices, and practical tips to ensure safe handling and compliance regarding controlled drugs within care homes. The "mini-mag" also contains case studies which can be useful for training in all settings.

Medicines Incidents Update

A big thank you to all care providers using the Ulysses Medication Incident Reporting Form and/or Patient Provider Feedback (PPF) form. Between July and September 2025 (Q2), 18 medication-related incidents were reported. Key Themes Identified:

- **Poor communication of changes to medicines, especially post-discharge or when stopped by another provider, leading to continued administration of discontinued medicines.**
- **Dispensing errors involving Monitored Dosage Systems (MDS).**
- **Brand Vs. generic medicine mix-ups**

You are also invited to join us at a **Medication Drop-In Session, 5th November 2025 14:00–15:00 via MS Teams** Led by Amy, Ceri & Jilly Hassall, this is a chance to discuss incidents, share solutions and discuss how we can better support you. Email Sylvia Barnes at sylviabarnes@nhs.net with attendee names and email addresses to book.

Reminder - Non-prescribed Medicines guidance

Winter is Coming – Remember to check out the [Guidance on Non-Prescribed Medicines in Community Settings](#) and NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin ICB *Think Which Service*. As we head into the colder months, it's common for people to experience seasonal symptoms such as coughs, colds, and minor aches. This is a timely reminder of the guidance which was developed to support care homes and home care providers in safely using purchased over-the-counter medicines and related products.

The guidance helps clarify how and when staff can administer non-prescribed medicines such as paracetamol or topical creams, and outlines the importance of record-keeping, consent, and consultation and communication with healthcare professionals.

With increased pressures on NHS services during winter, it's more important than ever to use healthcare resources wisely. The [Think Which Service campaign](#) encourages everyone to consider the right care, in the right place, at the right time.



- * Make sure your team is familiar with the guidance
- * Stock up on approved over-the-counter items, if appropriate

Let's get winter-ready and stay as safe as possible.

Lateral Flow Device Testing Information

Information provided by the STW ICB Infection, Prevention and Control Team from: [Management of Acute Respiratory Infection Outbreaks in Care Homes Guidance - Updated 24 July 2024](#).

Staff who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the [IPC in adult social care: acute respiratory infection \(ARI\) guidance](#). At a minimum, they should follow advice for other ARIs. Staff with symptoms of influenza-like illness (ILI) or ARI who are not tested for COVID-19 should stay off work until they feel well and have recovered from acute symptoms. Recovery from flu is unlikely within 3 days of onset. Flu vaccinations are free for frontline health and social care staff, with most appointments available from 1st October 2025.

COVID-19 Testing (Only for Those Eligible for Treatment)

Staff do not need to test for COVID-19 unless they are eligible for COVID-19 treatments. Testing for other ARIs is not needed unless directed by a clinician. Those eligible for COVID-19 treatments should take a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test as soon as symptoms start and follow the [guidance for people who are eligible for COVID-19 treatments](#).

New UTI Prevention & Awareness Toolkit - A Resource for Care Staff

A newly updated UTI Prevention and Awareness Toolkit 2025, produced by UKHSA and NHS England, is now available to support staff who care for older adults, especially in residential and domiciliary settings. The [toolkit](#) includes ready-to-use resources for staff, residents, and families and supports staff in recognising, preventing, and responding to UTIs in older people. It covers:

- Key symptoms, e.g. confusion or behaviour changes
- Avoiding unnecessary dipstick use

- Prevention through hydration, hygiene, toileting, and catheter care
- Guidance on when to escalate or seek clinical support

The toolkit promotes a consistent, confident, and evidence-based approach to UTI awareness and early intervention.

Rewarding Results from one Forward-Thinking Care Home

The team at Doddington Lodge Residential care Home, pictured here with some of their happy residents,



have already seen excellent outcomes by planning ahead and putting the UTI Prevention and Awareness Toolkit into practice. Staff have implemented enhanced personal hygiene routines, including more frequent support with intimate care and clear protocols around hygiene. Regular reviews of catheter care and cleaning practices have also been introduced, ensuring consistency across shifts. These improvements have helped reduce UTI rates and improved residents' overall comfort and dignity.

Staff report feeling more confident in preventing infections before they start, and residents and families have responded positively to the care home's proactive approach.

New Care Quality Commission (CQC) Guidance: Managing Constipation in Adult Social Care

The CQC has published new [guidance](#) to help adult social care providers recognise and manage constipation - a common but often underestimated health issue that can have serious or even fatal consequences if left untreated. For people in care settings, especially those who are older, less mobile, or unable to express discomfort, it can lead to complications like faecal impaction, bowel obstruction, or sepsis.

The CQC now expects care providers to take a proactive, person-centred approach including identifying people at risk, using tools like the [Bristol Stool Chart](#), promoting good diet and hydration, monitoring bowel patterns and having clear care plans in place. Special attention is needed for individuals on medications such as clozapine, which can potentially make constipation life-threatening.

Key takeaways:

- Recognise the signs and risk factors early
- Encourage fluids, fibre and mobility where possible
- Ensure care plans include bowel monitoring
- Train staff to act on red flags and follow PRN plans

Coffee Break Quote: "If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito."

Dalai Lama.



Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter.