

Medicines Regulatory Group



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

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All Community Pharmacies  
UCA  
NPA  
Community Pharmacy NI  
PSNI  
RPS  
MHRA  
RQIA

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: DH1/11/167421  
Date: 16 September 2011

Dear Colleague,

### **Patient Group Directions and Independent Medical Agencies**

1. You will be aware that the Prescription Only Medicines (Human Use) Order 1997 (as amended) makes provisions for persons conducting a retail pharmacy business to supply or administer prescription only medicines (POMs) under a Patient Group Direction (PGD) in specified circumstances.
2. Some Independent Medical Agencies (IMAs) in Great Britain have made enquiries of the Department related to the operation of PGDs in Northern Ireland. The Department had previously engaged with the matter of whether it would be lawful for a pharmacy business in Northern Ireland to operate a PGD pursuant to an arrangement made with an IMA registered only in another UK jurisdiction.
3. The Department is of the view, having accepted legal advice on the subject, that it would not be lawful, as the legislation currently stands, for a person conducting a retail pharmacy business in Northern Ireland to supply or administer POMs under a PGD arrangement with an IMA which is not registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA).
4. Retail pharmacy businesses are advised to ensure that any potential PGD arrangements with IMAs into which they may be considering entering are lawful under Medicines legislation.

Yours sincerely,

Prof M Mawhinney  
Head of Medicines Regulatory Group