



Department of

**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

To: Directors of Primary Care, HSSBs
All GPs

From: **Head of Inspection and Investigation**
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Your Ref:

Our Ref: IM36

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Dear Colleague

PRESCRIBING OF SCHEDULE 2, 3 AND 4 CONTROLLED DRUGS

As you will be aware, a range of issues pertaining to the management of controlled drugs was introduced recently through legislative change. Parallel to recommendations made in the rest of the United Kingdom, this Department is issuing the following guidance.

1. Prescribing more than 30 days supply

The Department is issuing a strong recommendation that, as good practice, the quantity of Schedule 2, 3 and 4 controlled drugs prescribed should not exceed 30 days supply. In exceptional circumstances, where the prescriber believes that a supply of more than 30 days is clinically indicated and would not pose an unacceptable risk to patient safety, the prescriber should:

- Record the reasons for this in the patient's notes
- Be ready to justify his/her decision if required.

2. Dispensing more than 30 days supply

Whilst it remains legal to dispense a prescription for Schedule 2, 3 or 4 controlled drugs for more than 30 days supply, pharmacists should ensure that there is genuine clinical need and be satisfied that such prescribing would not

pose an unacceptable risk to patient safety. Pharmacists should exercise their professional judgement and assess both the prescription and the situation to check the suitability for the patient. If there is concern that the prescription is not appropriate the prescriber should be contacted.

Yours sincerely



DR M MAWHINNEY
Head of Inspection and Investigation
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DR I McMASTER