

**Re-use of Medicines Scheme**

**What is meant by the term re-using medicines?**

Re-using medicines is the term used to describe a situation where a medicine that was originally prescribed for one person is used by someone else.

**Why am I being asked about re-use of medicines?**

Usually people’s medicines would not be re-used. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic the law has been amended to allow medicines to be re-used in certain situations for people living in care homes or hospices\*.

Re-use of medicines ensures that a person is able to be given medicines urgently to treat symptoms such as those experienced at the end of life. If medication were not re-used in this way the person may not receive the medicine in a timely manner.

You need to consent to allow medicines that were originally prescribed for you (or your relative), but which you/they no longer need, to be potentially used for someone else. You also need to consent to allow care staff to give you (or your relative) medicines originally prescribed for someone else, if the medicines cannot be supplied by the pharmacy.

A record of your wishes will be kept in your care record and will be followed when considering re-using your medicines or when giving another resident’s re-used medicines to you.

**Why are you asking me about re-use of medicines now?**

Re-use of medicines is intended as a last resort. A lot of work is being done with doctors, community pharmacies, care homes and hospices to make sure people continue to get their medicines in the usual ways. However, there is a possibility that the COVID-19 pandemic may affect the supply chain of medicines.

To ensure that everyone can get the medicines they need, re-use of medicines is being allowed in care homes and hospices when medicines would otherwise not be available for use.

We are asking everyone in advance whether you are happy to give or receive re-used medicines so that if, in the future, there is a time when your medicines need to be re-used your wishes have been made clear.

**Are re-used medicines safe?**

Yes. Systems have been developed to ensure medicines that are re-used are safe. Prior to be re-used all medicines must be stored appropriately and will be assessed as safe for use by a registered healthcare professional.

**Can anybody re-use medicines?**

No. Re-use of medicines is only allowed for people living in a care home or a hospice and only when the medicines have been assessed as safe to re-use by a registered healthcare professional.

**If I give my consent how long will this last?**

Your consent will remain for as long as the COVID-19 pandemic continues and the law allows. You can choose to change your mind at any time by telling a member of staff. When the re-use of medicines scheme is stopped, your consent for this will no longer be valid.

**If I do not give consent for my medicines to be re-used what will happen to the medicines I no longer need?**

Your wishes will be taken into consideration and if your medicines cannot be re-used they will be destroyed as waste medicines in the usual way.

**If I do not give consent to being given a re-used medicine what will happen?**

Re-use of medicines is intended as a last resort. If a medicine is needed but is not available, care staff will continue to work with your doctor and pharmacy to obtain a supply as quickly as possible or find an alternative medicine.

\* NHS England and Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) publication 23th April 2020: Coronavirus (Covid-19) Re-use of medicines in a Care Home or Hospice.