Safe Use of Medicines Policy

Title: **Safe Use of Medicines Policy**			
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Executive Lead:	NHS Lothian Medical Director		
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Executive Summary

NHS Lothian aims to improve the quality, safety and experience across the organisation. This policy supports this objective by ensuring that medicines are ordered, supplied, transported, stored, prescribed and administered by using procedures that meet the legal requirements, are in line with national guidelines and ensure the risk to patients and staff are managed effectively in all care settings.

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1.0 Purpose

NHS Lothian is responsible for establishing, documenting and maintaining an effective system to manage medicines safely and securely to meet patients' clinical needs. All areas where medicines are handled and used must have a system of procedures that meet legal requirements, that are in line with national guidance, and that ensure that risks to patients and staff are managed effectively in all care settings.

2.0 Policy statement

Medicines management is a multidisciplinary activity involving doctors, pharmacists, nurses, managers as well as patients.

2.1 To ensure that medicines are of the required quality.

2.2 To ensure clinical effectiveness and minimise risk to patients by ensuring that medicines are available at the time they are needed.

2.3 To ensure that medicine stocks are kept at an appropriate range and level to minimise wastage and are in line with the recommendations and policies of the Formulary Committee and Area Drug and Therapeutics Committee.

2.4 To ensure that medicines are prescribed in line with the Lothian Joint Formulary and/or specialist unit formularies, or have the required level of approval for use.

2.5 To ensure that the quality and security of medicines is maintained during transportation and are transported with due attention to health and safety considerations.

2.6 To ensure that the security and quality of medicines is maintained in all areas where medicines are stored or administered within NHS Lothian premises, or where they are issued to midwives, community nurses and ambulance officers for storage and use outwith NHS Lothian premises.

2.7 To ensure that all prescriptions for medicines are written according to accepted NHS Lothian standards and legal requirements.

2.8 To minimise the risk of errors with the prescribing, administration and supply of medicines.

2.9 To ensure that training is given to support the prescribing, administration and supply of medicines.

2.10 To maintain an accurate record of the medicines prescribed, administered and supplied to all patients.

2.11 To dispose of unwanted medicines safely.

2.12 To minimise wastage of medicines.

2.13 To ensure that there are systems in place to maintain the integrity of the supply chain.

3.0 Scope

3.1 All medicines administered or issued to patients within NHS Lothian premises are procured by and distributed through a pharmacy. Except for patients' own medicines where their use is appropriate, or where distribution through a home delivery company or alternative approved distribution service is appropriate.

3.2 There are systems for the transport of medicines that ensure their security, quality and integrity, and maintain the health and safety of the staff and the public.

3.3 A record is kept at each step where a medicine changes hands, and when it is administered or destroyed.

3.4 Stock lists and stock levels of medicines for clinical areas are agreed taking account of the requirement to have medicines available to meet patients' needs, and to minimise the risks associated with administration.

3.5 Medicines are stored appropriately to maintain their quality and security.

3.6 All stationery used for ordering medicines is stored securely to prevent fraudulent use.

3.7 All incidents involving medicines, including a breach of the system of security of medicines, are investigated and reported in line with the incident management policy.

3.8 All medicines administered or supplied to patients are prescribed by an authorised prescriber, or are administered or supplied by an approved person operating within legal frameworks.

4.0 Definitions

A medicinal product is defined in the Medicines Act (1968) as any substance being administered for a medicinal purpose. Medicines may be categorised as follows:

- Medicines and medicinal preparations which come under the provisions of the Medicines Act (1968). They include medicines used in clinical trials, unlicensed medicines, dressings, and medical gases.
- Controlled drugs i.e. substances controlled under the provisions of the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) and Regulations made under the Act.
- Alternative medicinal products e.g. herbal or homeopathic remedies, which are used for therapeutic purposes.

5.0 Implementation roles and responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility for implementing this policy and associated procedures as appropriate to their role.

The Medical Director has lead executive responsibility for the management of medicines.

Local managers in clinical areas, and other departments where medicines are handled and used, are responsible for establishing and maintaining procedures that ensure safety, security and efficiency. The policy provides a framework for the preparation of the required detailed local procedures.

Where the charge nurse is named as the responsible person for certain elements of the system, the equivalent manager is the responsible person in areas where there is no charge nurse.

6.0 Associated materials

Procedures to support the policy are available at https://policyonline.nhslothian.scot/Policies/Pages/safe-use-of-medicines-policy.aspx#tab3:

- For the safe and secure handling of medicines at each stage of their journey.
- For specific categories of medicines that require special handling arrangements.
- For specific medicines that require special handling arrangements for example patients with known or suspected latex allergies.
- For specific processes.
- For the preparation and administration of medicines by various routes.

7.0 Evidence base

The policy reflects the legal responsibilities as defined in the:

- Medicines Act (1968)
- Misuse of Drugs Act (1971)
- Misuse of Drugs Regulations (2001)
- Controlled Drugs (supervision of management and use) Regulations 2013

8.0 Stakeholder consultation

The Area Drug and Therapeutics Committee were consulted on content. The policy was displayed on the consultation zone for all NHS Lothian staff to comment on.

9.0 Monitoring and review

This policy will be formally reviewed every three years. The Medicines Policy Subcommittee will continuously review the implementation of the policy and prompt earlier review if required.