

NMC circular	03/2010
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Review date	10 March 2013
Replaces circular	None
Category	Midwifery, nursing, general public health and standards
Status	Action

Unlicensed medicines - changes to the indicative content of the independent and supplementary nurse prescribing programme - V300.

Summary

- The Nursing & Midwifery Council exists to protect the public. We do this by maintaining a register of nurses and midwives and by setting standards for education and practice.
- On 21 December 2009 legislation¹ was passed to allow nurse and midwife independent prescribers to prescribe unlicensed medicines for their patients on the same basis as doctors, dentists and supplementary prescribers.
- This circular comes into effect immediately. It requires approved educational institutions (AEI's) to amend the content and learning outcomes of independent and supplementary nurse prescribing programmes - V300 to reflect the changes in legislation. All programmes must conform by the 1 February 2011.
- This circular does not replace any other circular.
- This document should be read in conjunction with the following documents:
 - *Standards of proficiency for nurse and midwife prescribers* (NMC, 2006)
 - *The Code*
 - *NMC Circular 04/2010, Nurse and midwife independent prescribing of unlicensed medicines* (NMC, 2010)
 - *NMC Quality Assurance Handbook*

Background

- Unlicensed medicines are medicinal products that are not licensed for any medicines indication or age group. An unlicensed medicine is one that does not have a valid marketing authorisation (licence) in the UK.

¹ The Medicines for Human Use (Miscellaneous Amendments)(No.2) Regulations 2009 SI 3062:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/ukSI_20093062_en_1

- Previously, nurse and midwife prescribers have not been authorised to prescribe unlicensed medicines independently. They could prescribe unlicensed medicines as a supplementary prescriber as part of a clinical management plan.
- In 2008 the Commission on Human Medicine (CHM) established a Working Group (WG) to discuss “mixing” of medicines.
- During their discussions² the WG also considered unlicensed prescribing by nurse and midwife independent prescribers. The WG concluded that a natural extension to their recommendations for mixing of medicines would be to authorise nurse and midwife independent prescribers to order unlicensed medicines.
- The WG recommended that nurse and midwife independent prescribers should be authorised to prescribe unlicensed medicines for people in their care on the same basis as doctors, dentists and supplementary prescribers.
- The CHM endorsed the recommendation.
- On 21 December 2009, The Medicines for Human Use (Miscellaneous Amendments)(No.2) Regulations 2009, authorised nurse and midwife independent prescribers to prescribe unlicensed medicines to meet the individual needs of patients or clients on the same basis as doctors, dentists and supplementary prescribers.

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- This circular requires AEI’s to amend the content and learning outcomes of Independent and supplementary nurse prescribing programmes - V300 to reflect the changes in legislation. All programmes must conform by the 1 February 2011.
 - AEI’s are reminded that they need to inform the NMC using the process outlined in the Quality Assurance Handbook³ of the minor modifications they will be making.

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- This circular may be reproduced by all to whom it is addressed.
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This circular has been issued by

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² Report of the CHM working group on “Mixing Medicine”:
<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Howweregulate/Medicines/Availabilityprescribingandsupplyingofmedicines/Frequentlyraisedissues/Palliativecare/index.htm>

³ NMC *Quality Assurance Handbook* (September 2009) <http://www.nmc.mottmac.com/infoproviders/>