

## **Non-medical prescribing in DHCFT during the current COVID-19 Pandemic**

In normal circumstances non-medical prescribers (NMPs) in the Trust's clinical services (including Substance Misuse Services) are only able to prescribe for patients who they have seen face-to-face. This remains the standard to which we aim. During the current pandemic it is clear that services might need to work in innovative ways in order to meet patient need as safely and effectively as possible, while accepting that this might entail some additional risks that must be mitigated as far as is practicable. The need is particularly significant when prescriptions are required for Controlled Drugs as these remain subject to specific requirements including those for signatures. If these requirements are not adhered to, community pharmacies cannot dispense the medication.

During the pandemic NMPs working in the trust may undertake repeat prescribing of previously prescribed specialist medication even if not able to see the patient face-to-face, when there is no practical alternative. If prescribing in this way the NMP should satisfy themselves of the appropriateness of the prescription from patient records. If there is any doubt about clinical appropriateness, a medical opinion should be sought and documented in the clinical record. When prescribing without meeting the patient, the NMP should document this in the clinical record. It is important that any colleague who subsequently advises or prescribes to the same patient is aware that medication has been provided without the usual processes happening so that they can make their own judgement about risks, benefits and mitigations.

NMPs should be assured that the Trust will fully support them in the above practices for the duration of the current pandemic and are grateful of their support at this difficult time.

Approved by:

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