



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Seirbhís Aisíocaíochta Cúraim  
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Circular 019/25

## Phased Dispensing – Community Pharmacy Contractor Agreement 2025

Dear Pharmacist,

The supply of medication in instalments (“phased dispensing”) can support patients prescribed certain high-risk medications who are at risk of medication misadventure when these medications are supplied as the typical monthly instalment supplied under the Community Drug Schemes. Phased dispensing was introduced in 1996 for patient safety reasons.

Phased dispensing support is currently available under the GMS Scheme for the following reasons:

- Reason 1 - at the request of a patient's physician; or
- Reason 2 - due to the inherent nature of a medicinal product i.e. product stability and shelf life; or
- Reason 3 - where a patient is commencing new drug therapy with a view to establishing patient tolerance and acceptability before continuing on a full treatment regime.
- Reason 4 - in exceptional circumstances where the patient is incapable of safely and effectively managing the medication regimen.

Where a phased dispensing claim is submitted, the requirement is that an item be dispensed across multiple supply occasions.

As part of the Community Pharmacy Agreement 2025, it has been agreed to introduce improved controls in the management of phased dispensing and to limit it to specified high risk drugs, where a patient safety concern may exist. From **1<sup>st</sup> January 2026**, phased dispensing will be restricted to an approved list of medications provided by the HSE for Reason 1 and 4.

The list will be published online at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/pcrs/online-services/> under ‘Services for pharmacists only’ → ‘Phased Dispensing List’. The list by INN is provided in Appendix 1. The published list will be updated accordingly where there are withdrawals or additions of these products to the Reimbursement List.

Psychotropic medications represent a class of medication that are high risk, have a high dependency potential and carry a significant risk of misuse. They are often prescribed in the management of conditions where cognitive or functional impairments justify closer monitoring through phased supply. Other high-risk medicine classes include products containing opioids, codeine, pregabalin and gabapentin.

For Reason 1 and 4, by focusing GMS phased dispensing reimbursement on the medication categories on the approved list, phased dispensing payments can be targeted to medications with the highest risk or potential for misuse. From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026, GMS phased dispensing fees under Reason 1 and 4 will no longer be reimbursed for medication other than those on the approved list. The associated approval process on an individual patient basis that was in place will no longer apply. This phased dispensing approval system will be stood down and the new arrangement will come into effect.

GMS phased dispensing fees will remain payable as per current arrangements under Reason 2 and 3 and will not be subject to the approved list. Claims made under Reason 2 and 3 are subject to ongoing audit and review.

Phased dispensing continues to be applied under the GMS scheme only. It is not available under any other Community Drug Scheme or arrangement. Multiple claims for the same item in the same month raised under other Community Drugs Schemes, such as the Long Term Illness Scheme and Drugs Payment Scheme are not permitted. Multiple fees are only available outside of appropriate phased dispensing where 'de novo' review by the prescriber has occurred necessitating newly generated prescriptions.

It is important for audit purposes that supporting documentation can be provided to the HSE on request or during inspections to substantiate a phased dispensing supply to include the dates of each multiple supply occasion and signed collection record. These records can be maintained electronically.

Where nursing supervision is available in a patient's residential setting, phased dispensing claims should not be submitted but in any event, are not reimbursed.

### **Monitored Dosage Systems (MDS)**

Monitored Dosing Systems (MDS) are devices that enable the individual medicine doses to be organised according to the prescribed dose schedule. The State has never agreed to the funding of MDS. It will still remain at the discretion of the pharmacist to dispense medications using compliance aid systems, or for the prescriber to request same. Such items will not be reimbursed.

Pharmacies may decide to charge patients for non-reimbursed phased dispensing as a private service if it involves a medication which is not on the approved list.

PCRS will continue to monitor and inspect pharmacies to verify the reasonableness of claims and ensure compliance with contract. In the event that any individual has concerns they should be identified to PCRS at [PCRS.ProbityPharm@hse.ie](mailto:PCRS.ProbityPharm@hse.ie).

Yours faithfully,



Shaun Flanagan,  
Primary Care Reimbursement Service

## Appendix 1

### Approved Products by INN for Phased Dispensing under Reason 1 and 4

ATC	Non Proprietary Drug Name
N06AX22	Agomelatine
N05BA12	Alprazolam
N05AL05	Amisulpride
N06AA09	Amitriptyline
N05AX12	Aripiprazole
N05AH05	Asenapine
N06BA09	Atomoxetine
N05BA08	Bromazepam
N02AE01	Buprenorphine
N06AX12	Bupropion
N03AF01	Carbamazepine
N05AX15	Cariprazine
N05BA02	Chlordiazepoxide
N05AA01	Chlorpromazine
N06AB04	Citalopram
N05BA09	Clobazam
N06AA04	Clomipramine
N02AJ06	Codeine Combinations Excl. Psycholeptics
N02AJ06	Codeine, Combinations Excl. Psycholeptics
N02AJ07	Codeine and acetylsalicylic acid
N05BA01	Diazepam
N06DA02	Donepezil
N06AA16	Dosulepin
N06AX21	Duloxetine
N06AX21	Duloxetine
N06AB10	Escitalopram
N06AB10	Escitalopram
N02AB03	Fentanyl
N06AB03	Fluoxetine
N05AF01	Flupentixol
N05CD01	Flurazepam
N06AB08	Fluvoxamine
N02BF01	Gabapentin
N06DA04	Galantamine
N05AD01	Haloperidol
N02AA03	Hydromorphone
N03AX09	Lamotrigine
N05AA02	Levomepromazine
N06BA12	Lisdexamfetamine
N05AN01	Lithium
N06AA07	Lofepramine
N05BA06	Lorazepam
N06DX01	Memantine
N02AX05	Meptazinol
N06BA04	Methylphenidate
N05CD08	Midazolam
N06AX11	Mirtazapine
N06AG02	Moclobemide
N06BA07	Modafinil
N02AA01	Morphine

N05AH03	Olanzapine
N05AH03	Olanzapine
N02AA05	Oxycodone
N02AA55	Oxycodone And Naloxone
N05AX13	Paliperidone
N02AJ06	Paracetamol, Combinations Excl. Psycholeptics
N06AB05	Paroxetine
N02BF02	Pregabalin
N05AB04	Prochlorperazine
N04AA04	Procyclidine
R06AD02	Promethazine
N05AH04	Quetiapine
N06AX18	Reboxetine
N05AX08	Risperidone
N06DA03	Rivastigmine
N05CM05	Scopolamine
N06AB06	Sertraline
N03AG01	Sodium Valproate
N03AG01	Sodium Valproate & Valproic Acid
N05AL01	Sulpiride
N02AX06	Tapentadol
N05CD07	Temazepam
N02AX02	Tramadol
N02AJ14	Tramadol And Dexketoprofen
N02AJ13	Tramadol And Paracetamol
N06AF04	Tranylcypromine
N06AX05	Trazodone
N05CD05	Triazolam
N06AA06	Trimipramine
N03AG01	Valproic Acid
N06AX16	Venlafaxine
N06AX26	Vortioxetine
N05AE04	Ziprasidone
N05CF02	Zolpidem
N05CF02	Zolpidem
N05CF01	Zopiclone
N05AF05	Zuclopenthixol