



Preparing For... New Staff

When new staff join your organisation, it is important to ensure they have the knowledge and skills required to administer medicines safely.

So we need to look at:



The Background



Things to Consider



Actions to Take



How OPUS Can Help



Background

When staff join your workplace, they often arrive with varied levels of experience and knowledge. For example, new joiners may be:

- ➔ Individuals with no experience at all in the care sector;
- ➔ Individuals who have previously worked at other care organisations;
- ➔ Nurses or Senior Staff with many years' experience; or
- ➔ Agency workers who have not worked with your organisation before.

Each of these circumstances come with potential pitfalls that should be addressed to ensure the safe handling of medicines in your organisation.

We have looked at the pitfalls on the next page.



Considerations

Each type of new joiner comes with individual circumstances that should be reviewed before allowing them to administer medicines in your organisation.

Individuals with no experience at all in the care sector

- Have no background with medicines administration
- Need all current guidance and best practice to be able to administer medicines
- Can't administer medicines before they have been assessed as competent
- Aren't aware of the organisation's medicines policy & procedures
- Aren't aware of the individual care needs of the people being supported

Individuals with previous experience

- May have had previous training and assume they know what they are doing
- May assume they are competent
- May bring poor practice into your organisation
- May not have up-to-date knowledge or competence
- May not know what is best practice or current, despite having years of experience, or being an agency worker
- Will not have knowledge of your medicines policy and related procedures
- Aren't aware of the individual care needs of the people being supported



Actions to Take

Medicines
policy

Foundation
training

Shadow

Competency
assess

1

Ensure your organisation has an easy-to-read, in-date medicines policy with associated step-wise procedures for your staff to reference and follow. This will ensure consistency of approach.

2

Provide accredited Safe Handling of Medicines (Foundation) Training to all staff, regardless of previous experience to ensure every new starter receives accurate, effective baseline training.

3

Shadow staff in the workplace following training to ensure they can implement their training in their day-to-day role.

4

Competency assess staff yearly, in accordance with the requirements of Skills for Care.

- 1** **OPUS** can prepare or review and update your medicines policy and procedures to make sure the procedures are in line with best practice and are easy to read visual flowcharts, to make them simpler to implement for staff (check out an example of our easy-to-read procedures on the next page).
- 2** **OPUS** can provide an [accredited training programme](#) for staff to ensure a consistent approach. Our training provides practical tips to carry out medicines-related procedures in line with best practice, with the aim of minimising errors and keeping people safe. Check out our Gold Standard Training Pathway below or online.
- 3** **OPUS** can provide Managers training to empower and enable Managers to assess competency of their staff using the [Assessors Workshop for Medicines Handling](#) virtual learning course. Alternatively staff competence can be assessed online using the [foundation online competency assessment](#).
- 4** **OPUS** can provide medicines advice and support for staff for all medicines-related questions and queries. OPUS can advise on reducing medicines errors and the remedial actions necessary to minimise the likelihood of them reoccurring.

Care/ Support Staff in Care Services



Medicines Procedure Example



EXPERTS IN MEDICINES TRAINING

Organisation Name
& Logo

1

**Handwriting on MAR Sheets
(Including Dose Changes)**

DATE

1

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Medicines Procedure Example

1 of 3

Handwriting on MAR Sheets

- 1 The designated staff member should copy all the details and instructions (no abbreviations) from the medicines label directly onto the MAR sheet, ensuring the 6 Rights have been verified.

6 Rights of Administration:



- 2 This staff member should... to take accountability for the transcription.
- 3 A second trained member of staff should check both the entry on the MAR sheet and the original label. If both agree in all details, then the witness should countersign.
- 4 Any medicine that has been discontinued must be clearly indicated to avoid it being given in error. A single line should be drawn through the discontinued medicine and the entry should be signed and dated. Details of who has discontinued the medicine and when must be stated e.g. "Discontinued by Dr... on...(date)".

DATE

2

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Medicines Procedure Example

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Handwriting on MAR Sheets

If a handwritten entry is required on a MAR sheet because of a **dose change** or **interim supply**, the designated staff member must:

Copy the new instructions directly from the secure email or pharmacy medicine label onto the MAR sheet.

Check and then sign the new entry.

Ask a second suitably trained member of staff to witness both the new entry and the original secure email/label.

If both agree on all details, the witness should countersign.

Indicate on the MAR sheet where the authorisation for the dose change or addition has come from. Remember that this authorisation can only be from a clinician or appropriate healthcare professional.

It is good practice to ask the prescriber to initial the changes on their next visit where possible.

DATE

3

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Medicines Procedure Example

3 of 3

Handwriting on MAR Sheets TIPS & HINTS:



OPUS Top Tip

Sometimes, when handwritten changes are made to the MAR sheet one month, these changes may not be reflected on MAR sheets for future months. This may happen for a number of reasons such as the GP not updating the computer records appropriately with the new instructions.



OPUS Top Tip

To minimise the risk of error within 2 days of the new dosage instructions, the member of staff who made the handwritten changes to the MAR sheet (or a nominated member of staff) should follow up with the surgery to confirm that subsequent prescriptions will reflect the most recent dosage instructions.

DATE

4

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**For further information and advice about
how OPUS can help, please contact one of
our friendly team:**

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