

# Unit 41: Working with Medication in Health and Social Care

**Unit code:** J/600/8999

**QCF Level 3:** BTEC Nationals

**Credit value:** 5

**Guided learning hours:** 30

## ● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to enable learners to gain knowledge of different types of medication and means of administration. They will also be able to gain an understanding of related legislation, roles and responsibilities, and the principles of safe practice attached to working with medication.

## ● Unit introduction

Supporting the administration of medicines is a key function in the roles of many carers working in the health and social care sectors.

Learners will initially learn about the different commonly prescribed types of medication and the ways in which they are administered, as well as the changes or side effects that an individual may experience after taking medication.

The unit examines the importance of informed consent and mental capacity, as well as the importance of communication between carer and individual and between the carer and other professionals working with the individual. Learners will then develop an understanding of the administration of medicines pathway, including recording, reporting, storage and auditing procedures.

Within the unit learners will gain an understanding of the legislation and guidelines that underpin safe practice in the administration of medicines.

This unit has been developed from the *Knowledge Set for Medication* developed by Skills for Care, and will be useful for those working in health and social care settings.

## ● Learning outcomes

**On completion of this unit a learner should:**

- 1 Know the different types of medication and routes of administration
- 2 Understand the role of legislation when working with medication
- 3 Understand roles, responsibilities and boundaries when working with medication
- 4 Understand the principles of safe practice in the administration of medication.

# **Unit content**

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## **1 Know the different types of medication and routes of administration**

*Types of medication prescribed and administered to individuals:* antibiotics (used to fight infection); analgesics (used to relieve pain); antihistamines (used to relieve allergy symptoms, eg hay fever); antacids (used to relieve indigestion); anticoagulants (used to prevent blood clotting, eg following heart attack, thrombosis, some surgical procedures); psychotropic medicine (eg used to treat depression); diuretics (used to get rid of excess fluids in the body); laxatives (used to alleviate constipation); hormones (eg insulin, contraceptives, steroids, Hormone Replacement Therapy); cytotoxic medicines (used to treat some forms of cancer)

*Classification of medication:* prescription only medicine (POM); over-the-counter medicine (P – in the presence of pharmacist, GSL – General Sales List); controlled drugs; complementary/homeopathic remedies

*Routes by which medicines are administered and by whom:* inhalation (use of inhalers – nasal or oral); injection (by piercing the skin); ingestion (medicines/tablets taken orally, including under the tongue); topical (application of creams, lotions, ointments); infusion (intravenous drips); instillation (administration of drops to ears/nose/eyes); PR – per rectum (enemas, suppositories); PV – per vagina (pessaries, creams)

*Changes to individuals following administration of medicine:* physical changes, eg rashes, breathing difficulties, swellings, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, stiffness, shaking, headaches, drowsiness, constipation, weight gain; whether changes are the result of medication; need to check contraindications and medicine interactions before administration, including home or over-the-counter remedies, or complementary therapies or remedies

## **2 Understand the role of legislation when working with medication**

*Legislation and guidance that controls the prescribing, dispensing, administration, storage and disposal of medicines:* relevant sections from, eg Medicines Act 1968 + amendments, Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (Controlled Drugs) + amendments, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Access to Health Records Act 1990, Data Protection Act 1998, COSHH Regulations 1999, Care Standards Act 2000 (receipt, storage and administration of medicines), Administration and Control of Medicines in Care Homes and Children's Services June 2003, Hazardous Waste Regulations 2005

*Legal framework:* how the organisation's policies and procedures reflect these for safe handling of medicines by all workers – prescribing, dispensing, administration, storage and disposal

### **3 Understand roles, responsibilities and boundaries when working with medication**

*Individuals involved in this process: prescribers (medical and non-medical); managers; social care staff; ancillary staff; clerical staff/administrators*

*Responsibilities and boundaries of all workers with regard to the safe handling of medicines (prescribing, dispensing, administration, storage and disposal): various care contexts, eg care homes (personal or nursing care), day services, an individual's own home, sheltered accommodation, supported housing, other networks and services for individuals (eg education, religious establishments, voluntary agencies, activities and entertainment); the need to check that the medicine received matches the medication and dosage prescribed by the prescriber and is listed on the appropriate documentation; the need to seek guidance and support (and from where) about the medicine and dosage prescribed for any particular individual, eg prescriber (medical or non-medical), NHS Direct, manager, nurse, or from supportive reference material; the need for confidentiality, when and to whom information about an individual's medication may be disclosed or discussed, eg doctor, pharmacist, other care professionals, relatives/solicitor with enduring power of attorney*

### **4 Understand the principles of safe practice in the administration of medication**

*Obtaining consent for administration: mental capacity and informed consent; use of independent advocate, family member, medical professional to assist in achieving informed consent; situations where informed consent is not possible; acting in the best interests of the individual where informed consent is not possible*

*Preparation prior to administration: risk assessment in relation to self-administration, secondary administration; preparation prior to administration – basic hygiene procedures, correct equipment (eg gloves, dosset box), correct recording documents*

*Administration of medicines: ensuring the correct medication, correct dose, correct person, correct time, correct route or method; patient self-administration of medicines; organisational policy, patient choice*

*Recording, reporting and seeking advice: what to record (the medication given, to whom the medication is given, the time it is given, the dosage given, the method of administration); comments and signature after each administration; reporting and seeking advice (about reactions, refusal of individual to take medication, where errors occur in administration)*

*Audit and storage of stock: ensuring medication is stored according to manufacturers' instructions (in a clean, ordered and secure environment, at the correct temperature); ensuring that number of doses received, administered and remaining are recorded accurately; checking records for accuracy; ensuring out-of-date and unwanted medicines are disposed of safely*

## **Assessment and grading criteria**

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

<b>Assessment and grading criteria</b>		
<b>To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:</b>	<b>To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:</b>	<b>To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:</b>
<b>P1</b> describe the routes of administration of different types of medication commonly prescribed to individuals [IE1; CT2]		
<b>P2</b> describe common side effects of different types of medication [IE1; CT2]		
<b>P3</b> explain relevant sections of key legislation and associated guidelines with regard to the administration of medicines [IE4]	<b>M1</b> discuss how organisational policies and procedures are influenced by legislation and guidelines with regard to the administration of medicines	<b>D1</b> evaluate the effect of legislation and guidelines on the administration of medicines
<b>P4</b> explain the roles and responsibilities of individuals with regard to the administration of medicines in a health or social care setting [CT3]	<b>M2</b> compare the responsibilities and level of accountability assigned to individuals involved in the administration of medicines	
<b>P5</b> explain safe practice in the administration and storage of medicines. [RL5; CT4]	<b>M3</b> discuss how to ensure safe practice in the administration and storage of medicines.	<b>D2</b> evaluate the role of safe practice in the administration and storage of medicines in terms of outcomes for individuals.

**PLTS:** This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills which are embedded in the assessment of this unit. By achieving the criteria, learners will have demonstrated effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

<b>Key</b>	IE – independent enquirers CT – creative thinkers	RL – reflective learners TW – team workers	SM – self-managers EP – effective participators
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# **Essential guidance for tutors**

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## **Delivery**

This unit needs to be delivered by an appropriately qualified tutor.

The unit could be introduced through initial class discussions to encourage thinking about the administration of medicines. This will encourage learners to consider and share any previous experiences in relation to the topic, for example compliance and why people may not take prescribed medication as instructed. Learners should be encouraged to relate their learning in this unit to their work experience placements, and draw on examples from the health or social care workplace as much as possible.

Following this introduction, the unit could be delivered using a combination of tutor input, individual/small group research on the different groups of medicines followed by presentations, and case studies, visits or guest speakers. Active learning techniques should be used as much as possible, as should reference to the workplace. Misconceptions about medicines should be identified, discussed and rectified. Learners should be able to match routes of administration to the individual and different forms of medication. When discussing physical or other changes to individuals following the administration of medication, it should be emphasised that changes may not be as a result of the administration and, irrespective of the cause of the changes, the need to seek advice should be stressed. Learners need to be clear about the levels of responsibility, accountability and lines of reporting in a range of health and social care organisations. Learners also need to understand the issues surrounding consent and informed consent, particularly in relation to the Mental Capacity Act 2005. These issues may best be addressed using case study material.

Learners could carry out internet research into aspects of legislation relevant to the administration of medicines, to summarise these and to share their findings in small groups. When considering roles, responsibilities and boundaries in relation to medication, learners should draw on their work placement experiences for examples, and should then be encouraged to share these in small groups or with the whole class in order to broaden learner experiences.

## Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Unit introduction.
Discussion: sharing previous experiences of administration of medication.
Tutor input: introducing different types of medication, their classifications and uses; use of visual/interactive learning; diseases and conditions treated by medication.
Tutor input: introduction to routes of administration and side effects of medication; use of case studies.
Learner research: in groups, research different groups of medication and present findings to the whole class.
<b>Assignment 1: Classifying medication (P1, P2)</b>
Tutor input: introduction to the process of administering medication and safe practices this will provide the foundation for the unit. More discussion and learning time will be allowed towards the end of the unit.
Guest speaker/visit: local GP to discuss the process of prescribing medication and common side effects of taking different types of medication; link to legislation; follow-up discussion.
Online session: with guidance, learners research legislation and guidelines that control the prescribing, dispensing, administration, storage and disposal of medicines.
Discussion: on the role of legislation. Why does it exist? What are the consequences of non-compliance? How does legislation affect organisational policies and procedures? Learners could bring in copies of policies from their work placements, if appropriate, to use as a tool for discussion.
Worksheet: matching scenarios to sections of legislation or guidelines.
<b>Assignment 2: Legislation (P3, M1, D1)</b>
Tutor input: introduction to roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in various stages of administering medication (prescribers, managers, social care staff, ancillary staff, clerical staff etc); responsibilities and boundaries of each role should be discussed; lines of reporting; levels of accountability, procedures etc.
Guest speaker/workplace visit: used to support the above discussions; How does it work in practice? Learners to prepare suitable questions on procedures and roles related to administering medication; follow-up discussion.
Group work: using a case study, learners will consider issues surrounding consent, confidentiality, disclosure etc; groups to present their findings.
<b>Assignment 3: Roles and responsibilities (P4, M2)</b>
Tutor input: returning to the procedures and safe practices in the administration of medication Tutor to outline the safe practices related to, for example, obtaining consent, preparation before administration, administration, recording, reporting, seeking advice, audit and storage, disposal.
Discussion: bring the unit together by considering the purpose of safe practices at all stages in administering medication. Learners can use examples from work placements or visits to supplement discussion; How can we ensure safe practices? How effective are current safe practices? Could they be improved?
Group work: to prepare for the final assignment, learners will use case studies to discuss and research whether individuals involved in the scenarios are following safe practices and are working within the boundaries of their responsibilities.
<b>Assignment 4: Safe practices (P5, M3, D2)</b>
Unit review and assessment.

## Assessment

This unit could be assessed using one scenario-based holistic assignment, or through two or three case studies, according to the needs of the cohort.

For P1, learners need to describe the different types of medicines used to treat common conditions such as coronary artery disease and thrombosis, stroke, cancers, diabetes, infections, allergies and mental ill health. They need to show their knowledge of the classifications of these medicines, the route of administration (oral, intravenous, intramuscular injection, inhaler etc) and, for P2, they must describe common side effects associated with these medicines.

For P3, learners must explain which sections of current legislation and guidelines relate to, and inform the various stages in the administration of medicines (prescription, dispensation, administration, storage and disposal). It is not necessary for learners to recite large sections of these documents as the skill is in understanding the role of the legislation and linking it to the various tasks involved in administering medicines.

For M1, this needs to be expanded to discuss how legislation is reflected in organisational policy within health or social care organisations. Learners therefore need to consider the policies and procedures in at least one health or social care setting, and explain how legislation and guidelines have influenced these. For D1, learners need to evaluate the implementation of the policies in place either in their own organisation or through a fictional scenario as part of the assignment. They should identify clearly where the law has been implemented and where it has not.

Evidence for P4 would show some understanding of who is involved in the production and manufacture of medicines, prescribing, dispensing and administering medicines, including safe transportation and storage. This would also include the responsibilities of each role and the various boundaries associated with this. For M2, learners would provide evidence that they have compared the roles and responsibilities and levels of accountability assigned to each role. This would also cover issues around disclosure and consent, demonstrating an understanding of mental capacity and how to ensure consent is given.

P5 evidence would show learner understanding of the process of administering medicines and how to follow organisational policies and additional guidelines, including administering medicines through different routes. The explanation needs to include information about the storage procedures for medicines. M3 would involve discussing how to ensure safe practices are followed in the workplace. This could be achieved through a group discussion or debate, following which each learner will produce notes. For D2, learners will evaluate the role of safety practices, with strengths and possible weaknesses being considered. In this learners will also consider the implications of non-compliance such as antibiotic resistant pathogens or the impact on the individual's health.

## Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2	Classifying medication	As part of your nurse training you have been working in your local pharmacy and have decided to prepare study notes on the different types of medication and which disorders they treat.	Written report/set of notes or visual/online database of information.
P3, M1, D1	Legislation	A new government statute requires all organisations that administer medication to display the relevant legislation so that all staff (and the public if appropriate) can see.	Prepare a visual display that shows the sections of legislation that relate to the administering of medication.
P4, M2	Roles and responsibilities	You work in a care home for people with mental health difficulties and need to review the various roles involved in the administration of medication.	Report.
P5, M3, D2	Safe practices	You are a health and safety officer at a pharmacy and have been asked to review the practices and procedures for handling, administering and storing medication.	Case study review.

## Links to National Occupational Standards (NOS), other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Health and Social Care sector suite (see Appendix A) and has links with units from other qualifications in that suite. See Appendix E for NOS links and Appendix G for a mapping of the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework against particular units in this qualification.

## **Essential resources**

The following resources are essential for delivery of this unit:

- an appropriately qualified tutor
- library resources with key texts and other reference materials
- work experience placements.

In addition, the following resources are considered to be highly valuable:

- case study materials
- guest speakers
- visits.

## **Employer engagement and vocational contexts**

Learner experience will be greatly enhanced by work experience placements, reading media reports and from engaging with guest speakers, for example from the NHS or pharmaceutical organisations.

## **Indicative reading for learners**

### **Textbooks**

Railton D – Knowledge Sets: *Handling Medication* (Heinemann, 2007) ISBN 978435402310

Simonsen T, Aarbakke J, Kay I, Sinnott P and Coleman I – *Illustrated Pharmacology for Nurses* (Hodder Arnold, 2006) ISBN 9780340809723

Stretch B and Whitehouse M – *BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Health and Social Care Student Book 1* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 9781846907663

Stretch B and Whitehouse M – *BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Health and Social Care Student Book 2* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 9781846907470

Wilcher M – *Handbook on Medication for Carers of People with Learning Disabilities* (South Birmingham Primary Care Trust, 2005) ISBN 9780954970000

### **Journals and magazines**

*Community Care*

*Nursing Times*

### **Websites**

[www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/en/ukpgaen\\_20050009\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/en/ukpgaen_20050009_en_1)

Explanatory notes on the Mental Capacity Act

[www.nmc-uk.org/aArticle.aspx?ArticleID=3056](http://www.nmc-uk.org/aArticle.aspx?ArticleID=3056)

Nursing and Midwifery Council Code of Practice

[www.rpsgb.org.uk](http://www.rpsgb.org.uk)

Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

[www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk)

Sector Skills Council for Care and Development

[www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)

Sector Skills Council for the UK Health Sector

## Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>Independent enquirers</b>	[IE1] identifying questions to answer when researching different types of medicines, the routes of administration and side effects associated with them [IE4] analysing and evaluating the relevance of information when explaining how particular sections of legislation relate to the administration of medicines
<b>Creative thinkers</b>	[CT2] asking questions to extend their thinking when researching different types of medicines [CT3] connecting their own and others' ideas and experiences when explaining the roles and responsibilities of various individuals involved in the administration of medicines
<b>Reflective learners</b>	[RL5] evaluating work placement experiences related to the safe administration of medicines.

## ● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>ICT – Use ICT systems</b>	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	using various ICT systems to search for information on different types of medicines and to prepare assignments
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	storing information efficiently when preparing assignments
<b>ICT – Find and select information</b>	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	using a variety of sources, for example internet search engines and journals, to gather information for the assignment on different types of medicines
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	choosing which information is relevant for each assignment
<b>ICT – Develop, present and communicate information</b>	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• text and tables</li> <li>• images</li> <li>• numbers</li> <li>• records</li> </ul>	entering and formatting information appropriately to suit the purpose of the document
<b>Mathematics</b>	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	understanding the mathematical problem which explains how medicines are dispensed
<b>English</b>	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	taking part in discussions about how to ensure safe practice in the administration and storage of medicines listening to guest speakers and preparing questions to ask
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	reading relevant legislation and forming ideas about how it relates to the administration of medicines
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	producing different pieces of writing, for example notes from a group debate and a report.