



Health and
Social Care



Department of
Health
An Roinn Sláinte
Mánnystrie O Poustie
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Community Pharmacy Palliative Care Network

Service Specification and Guidance

November 2025

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1. Background

Northern Ireland is projected to have the largest rise in demand for palliative care services throughout the United Kingdom, with a 32% increase predicted between 2023 and 2048¹. As specialist resources are limited, the majority of palliative care will be provided by primary care services. Community pharmacies play a key role in ensuring the availability of anticipatory medicines at short notice, aligning with NICE NG31² (Care of dying adults in the last days of life), recommendations for symptom management in end of life care. In addition to supply and professional advice, community pharmacies are well placed to ensure continuity of care and to provide timely, compassionate support to patients and their carers.

It is important to note that all community pharmacies can dispense palliative care medicines. However, to address the increasing need for community pharmacy palliative care services, the Strategic Planning and Performance Group at the Department of Health (SPPG) have undertaken a review of existing arrangements. Historically this comprised of a cohort of pharmacies who were enrolled within the Network of Palliative Care Pharmacies that provided a supply and advice function, and then an additional recruitment of pharmacies that took place within COVID-19 that had a supply-only role.

SPPG, in collaboration with CPNI and other relevant stakeholders envision that the unification of these two strands of service will enhance the overall service provision to this patient cohort.

2. Service aims and objectives

The aim of the service is to:

- To ensure that patients and their family/carers have timely access to essential palliative care medicines, support and advice.

The objectives of the service are to:

- Provide timely, local access to essential palliative care medicines during the pharmacy's normal opening hours.
- Support continuity of care for patients in need of palliative and end of life care.
- Provide advice to patients and carers about the use of palliative medicines.
- Act as an information hub and a local area of expertise in palliative medicines.
- Promote integrated working and communication with other healthcare providers such as GP practices, OOHs medical services, specialist nursing services, care homes hospices and other community pharmacies.

3. Service outline

3.1 Patient Eligibility for the service

All patients who require access to palliative care medications and/or advice are eligible for the service.

3.2 Pharmacy Eligibility for service

The service can only be provided from participating community pharmacies where the contractor:

- a) Holds a contract with the SPPG to deliver the service.
- b) Ensures that staff are trained, competent and available to deliver the service.
Pharmacists must undertake relevant training to ensure clinical care competency prior to commencing service delivery (see section 6 'training').
- c) Ensures a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is in place to support delivery of the service in line with the service specification and guidance.
- d) Ensures that the service is available during all of the pharmacy's opening hours, where practically possible.
- e) Maintains the agreed list of essential medicines ensuring all stock is available and in date, in line with the most up to date formulary (See Appendix 1).
- f) Must regularly complete audit of stock to ensure stock list to ensure that timely access to the full formulary list is available. An example audit proforma is included in Appendix 3 and record of audit should be retained for 2 years
- g) Undertake monitoring in line with the requirements outlined within the service specification.
- h) A suitable private consultation area should be available within the pharmacy should a patient/carer wish to use it.

3.3 Pharmacist Eligibility to provide the service

This service can only be provided by pharmacists who are:

- a) Registered with the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI).
- b) Working in a pharmacy contracted to provide the service.
- c) Competent to provide the service (see section 6 'training').

3.4 Accessing the Service

- a) Requests to avail of the service may be made by patients, carers, relatives, or healthcare professionals.
- b) Any HS21 presented for supply must meet regulatory standards.

3.5 Service formulary

A list of palliative care drugs to be stocked is provided in Appendix 1. The Formulary will be kept under review. Changes to the formulary will be communicated to pharmacies contracted to provide the service.

4. Professional responsibility

- a) It is the responsibility of individual pharmacists to have suitable indemnity insurance cover
- b) At all times the pharmacist will be required to preserve patient confidentiality in line with their responsibilities as members of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland and GDPR regulations
- c) Access to patient's confidential medical records on NIECR: Pharmacists should only access the records of patients who have consented to have their records accessed via NIECR. Please be aware for both user and patient safety and governance, NIECR is heavily audited.
- d) At no point does this service abrogate the professional responsibility of the individual pharmacist. They must use their professional judgement at all times.
- e) The responsible pharmacist on the day is responsible for ensuring that the service is delivered in line with the service specification and guidance.
- f) Any complaints relating to the service should be dealt with in line with the participating pharmacy's complaints SOP

5. Training

All pharmacists must undertake necessary training to meet the competency required to provide the service.

Initial training provided by SPPG on 9th December 2025 7:30-8:45pm. This will be completed virtually and will be recorded.

Completion of the End of Life Care training module from NICPLD (2-hour online module - [Palliative care online module](#)).

All pharmacists planning to provide this service must complete the above training prior to service delivery.

Further ongoing clinical training opportunities will be provided periodically by the SPPG Clinical Service co-ordinator

It is good practice for the pharmacy contractor to keep documentary evidence that pharmacy staff involved in the provision of the service are competent and remain up to date with regards to the specific skills and knowledge that are appropriate to their role, and to the aspects of the service they are delivering.

6. Remuneration and Reimbursement

The fees payable to pharmacy contractors for this service are:

- Annual retention fee of £2400. A balancing payment will be made in respect of the remainder of 2025/26. From 1st April, this will be paid in monthly instalments of £200.
- Reimbursement for expired stock - See Appendix 2

7. Service monitoring and evaluation

- a) In line with our commitment to delivering person-centered palliative care, the provision of the Community Pharmacy Palliative Care Network will include meaningful engagement with patients, carers, and key stakeholders. Insights gathered will inform the future delivery of this service. This approach will ensure that the service remains responsive to the needs and preferences of service users and their families and those providing end of life care.
- b) The pharmacy contractor is required to co-operate on a timely basis in respect of any monitoring, review or investigation being undertaken by SPPG / BSO regarding the service.

8. Promotion of the service

BSO hosts the locations of the palliative care pharmacies on the website.

[Northern Ireland Community Pharmacies providing Palliative Care Services](#)

SPPG will provide printed posters for use within the pharmacy. Pharmacies may also wish to promote the service on Twitter and Instagram using the resources available on the PCI and BSO websites. The pharmacy contractor shall not publicise the availability of the service other than using any materials specifically provided by SPPG without the prior agreement of the SPPG or in any way which is inconsistent with the professional nature of the service.

9. Other terms and conditions

- a) The pharmacy contractor must notify the SPPG local office of intention to withdraw from the service. Three months' notice is required to withdraw from the service.
- b) The pharmacy contractor shall not give, promise or offer to any person engaged or employed by him any gift or reward or set targets, against which that person will be measured, to recruit patients to the service
- c) The pharmacy contractor shall ensure that service provision is in accordance with professional standards.

10. References

1. <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/globalassets/media/documents/policy/policy-publications/2023/how-many-people-need-palliative-care.pdf> (accessed 25/09/2025)
2. [Overview | Care of dying adults in the last days of life | Guidance | NICE](#) (accessed 25/09/2025)

11. Appendices

Appendix 1: Community Pharmacy Palliative Care Network Formulary
Appendix 2: Palliative Care Network Claim Form
Appendix 3: Stock Audit Proforma
Appendix 4: Useful resources

DRUG	STOCK
Alfentanil 1mg/2ml Injection	1 x 10
Cyclizine 50mg/ml Injection	2 x 5
Dexamethasone 3.3mg/ml Injection	1 x 10
Furosemide 50mg/5mls Injection	2 x 10
Glycopyrronium 200micrograms/ml Injection	1 x 10
Haloperidol 5mg/ml Injection	1 x 10
Hyoscine Butylbromide 20mg/ml (Buscopan [®]) Injection	1 x 10
Hyoscine Hydrobromide 400micrograms/ml Injection	1 x 10
Levomepromazine 25mg/ml Injection	1 x 10
Lorazepam 1mg Tablets	1 x 28
Metoclopramide 10mg/2ml Injection	1 x 10
Midazolam 10mg/2ml Injection	2 x 10
Morphine Sulfate (Oramorph [®]) 10mg/5ml Oral Solution	3 x 100ml
Morphine Sulfate 10mg/ml Injection	1 x 10
Morphine Sulfate 30mg/ml Injection	1 x 10
Ondansetron 4mg/2ml Injection	1 x 5
Oxycodone 5mg/5ml Oral Solution	1 x 250ml
Oxycodone 10mg/1ml Injection	2 x 5
Oxycodone 20mg/2ml Injection	2 x 5
Oxycodone 50mg/1ml Injection	1 x 5
Oxygen Cylinders and one giving set	2 x Size AF
Sodium Chloride 0.9% 10ml Injection	1 x 10
Water for Injection 10ml	2 x 10

Appendix 2 - Palliative Care Network Claim Form



PALLIATIVE CARE NETWORK MEDICINES CLAIM FORM PCN_Claim1

FOR FIRST CLAIM ONLY

COMPLETE RANGE OF PALLIATIVE CARE MEDICINES (as per list supplied)	AMOUNT CLAIMED (as per copy	
	£	p

FOR OUT-OF-DATE STOCK (& ADDITIONS TO STOCK LIST)

MEDICINE or out of hours wholesaler costs.	DATE EXPIRED	PACK SIZE	QUANTIT Y	PRICE PER PACK	AMOUNT CLAIMED (attach invoice or	
					£	p

TOTAL CLAIMED		
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I claim reimbursement of the cost of the above medicines or services which are required to be held as part of:

Community Pharmacy Palliative Care Network

(Please tick correct box above)

Contractor No: Date:

Contractor Name/Address:

Pharmacist Signature:

Please Print Name:

For Board Use Only Signature for authorisation of payment: Account Code: _____ Adjustment Code: _____	Date: _____ Date: _____
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Return to: Integrated Care Directorate

HSCB Local Office

Form: PCN_Claim1

Appendix 3 - Stock Audit Proforma

DRUG	STOCK	Current stock	On order (Y/N)	Short? (Y/N)
Alfentanil 1mg/2ml Injection	1 x 10			
Cyclizine 50mg/ml Injection	2 x 5			
Dexamethasone 3.3mg/ml Injection	1 x 10			
Furosemide 50mg/5mls Injection	2 x 10			
Glycopyrronium 200micrograms/ml Injection	1 x 10			
Haloperidol 5mg/ml Injection	1 x 10			
Hyoscine Butylbromide 20mg/ml (Buscopan [®]) Injection	1 x 10			
Hyoscine Hydrobromide 400micrograms/ml Injection	1 x 10			
Levomepromazine 25mg/ml Injection	1 x 10			
Lorazepam 1mg Tablets	1 x 28			
Metoclopramide 10mg/2ml Injection	1 x 10			
Midazolam 10mg/2ml Injection	2 x 10			
Morphine Sulfate (Oramorph [®]) 10mg/5ml Oral Solution	3 x 100ml			
Morphine Sulfate 10mg/ml Injection	1 x 10			
Morphine Sulfate 30mg/ml Injection	1 x 10			
Ondansetron 4mg/2ml Injection	1 x 5			
Oxycodone 5mg/5ml Oral Solution	1 x 250ml			
Oxycodone 10mg/1ml Injection	2 x 5			
Oxycodone 20mg/2ml Injection	2 x 5			
Oxycodone 50mg/1ml Injection	1 x 5			
Oxygen Cylinders and one giving set	2 x Size AF			
Sodium Chloride 0.9% 10ml Injection	1 x 10			
Water for Injection 10ml	2 x 10			

Appendix 4: **Useful resources**

- NI Formulary Palliative Care Page [Palliative Care | NI Formulary](#)
Contains NI Symptom Management at the end of life guidelines, opioid equivalence guidance, heart failure and diabetes end of life guidelines
- EOLAS ([Eolas Medical](#))
Access the “space – Belfast HSCT: Adult and Paediatric Antimicrobial and Palliative Care Guidelines.”
Navigate to the “Adult Palliative Care Guide”
Information on how to use and access the EOLAS app will be provided during training.
- PallCare matters website [Palliative Care Matters](#)
Free syringe driver compatibility checking website
- [Palliative Care - Business Services Organisation \(BSO\) Website](#)
Details on network and links to clinical guidelines
- [Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines | Right Decisions](#)
Useful resource of clinical guidelines used in palliative care in Scotland
- The Palliative Care Formulary www.medicinescomplete.com (subscription required) or physical copy of the book).
- The Syringe Driver Book (Dickman et al) on medication compatibility in syringe pumps