



**A joint statement from the Care Inspectorate and the SSSC on ethical and professional decision-making in the COVID-19 pandemic, and risk assessment guidance on repurposing of medicines within care home services**

Health and social care staff are playing a vital role caring for people during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We recognise that the prime concern for everyone is the health, safety and wellbeing of people experiencing care. We also acknowledge the continued dedication, professionalism, compassion and commitment of all those working to care for people in the most difficult of circumstances; we thank you all for all that you do.

We acknowledge that in certain circumstances staff may need to depart from established practices in the administration of medication, in order to care for people in an ethical manner.

The pandemic raises concerns with accessing palliative care medicines, particularly controlled drugs, due to either fragility of the medicine supply chain (locally or nationally), or if people who need care deteriorate rapidly out of hours when a prescription cannot be dispensed.

The repurposing of medicines prescribed for someone else is not a practice that is normally acceptable. However, at this time, if there is no other option available, we acknowledge that this may be an ethical and moral step that may be considered.

Repurposing of medicines is not a decision to be taken lightly. It should be seen as a last resort to provide a patient with access to palliative medication that they require when other options to access stock cannot be made in a timely way to meet the patient needs. Such decisions should be taken within a local governance framework that includes undertaking of a risk assessment and a decision record made.