



## Policy Document

### **Recommendations on the Use of Returned/Unused Dispensed Medicines.**

The Pharmacists Board has developed these recommendations to clarify issues arising when dispensed medicines are returned to a pharmacy.

#### **Policy Statement**

**Medicines that have been supplied to a patient and have left the pharmacy should NOT, in the event of return, be re-supplied to another patient even though the medicine may appear to be in its original condition.**

Pharmaceutical products that have been supplied to a patient and removed from a pharmacy are deemed to have moved outside the controlled supply chain and consequently are at risk of having been either incorrectly stored in circumstances that may adversely affect their effectiveness or safety, or the subject of accidental or deliberate contamination.

#### **The Scope**

The recommendations cover unused medicines returned to pharmacies that:

- have been supplied by that pharmacy for patient use at home (including a nursing home) and are returned to a pharmacy by the patient or their carer, or
- are medicines dispensed elsewhere that are brought to a pharmacy by the patient or their carer.

#### **Background**

The Board is aware pharmacists have a concern that medicines are expensive and should not be wasted. However the Board believes the overriding principles are maintaining quality and safety in the supply of medicines to patients and compliance with relevant legislation governing the supply and possession of medicines.

In general, the quality of a medicine cannot be guaranteed if it has left the controlled supply chain (manufacturer – wholesaler – pharmacy). Once it has been supplied to the patient there are a range of hazards that cannot be ignored including loss of potency from storage at higher than recommended temperatures to accidental or deliberate contamination.

Therefore medicines that have left a pharmacy should not be administered or resupplied to another patient even though the product remains in date and the packaging appears intact.

The Board believes the only instances where previously dispensed medicines may be re-used are where:

- a patient who previously returned a medicine to a pharmacy requested it back; or
- a medicine had been dispensed but not collected by the patient. In such a case the medicine may be re-used for another patient provided that:
  - it would not expire prior to the course of treatment being completed;
  - the packaging is not damaged in any way;
  - any labelling relating to the previous supply process has been completely removed; and,
  - supply is in accordance with any relevant legislation.

**For further information contact the Pharmacists Board.**