

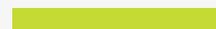
THE MEDICAL CANNABIS CLINICIANS SOCIETY

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

A GUIDE FOR UK DOCTORS



APRIL 2022 V1.5



HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

THE MEDICAL CANNABIS CLINICIANS SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



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Many clinicians contact the Medical Cannabis Clinicians Society looking for clarity about what is and is not permitted when it comes to prescribing this treatment option for patients. Our expert committee has produced the following guidelines to support you on your journey.

The information which follows guides you through the steps required to satisfy these requirements, with further information about the practical steps you should take to ensure you are confident, compliant and well informed.

Please note, that all information is correct at the time of writing and will be updated each year.

If you are a GMC specialist consultant or a doctor who can prescribe with direction under Shared Care arrangements, then you can prescribe medical cannabis. According to the General Medical Council, doctors can prescribe if they satisfy the following requirements:

- Doctors are aware of the misuse of drugs regulations
- Doctors have a good awareness of the available guidelines
- Doctors are aware of the evidence base for this treatment
- Doctors are prescribing within their own area of expertise

Read on to find out how to begin prescribing this treatment for your patients.



1 FIND A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

Join The Medical Cannabis Clinicians Society at www.ukmccs.org.

Membership gives you access to a peer support network of prescribing doctors, expert mentorship, regular sector updates and reduced entry for events and training.

Speak to our committee members, some of whom are already prescribing.

Share your experience of learning and training, share evidence and research and ask for support, 24/7.

It's a good idea to explore what's out there in terms of private clinics and groups in the sector and attend events. **Search Eventbrite** for medical cannabis and connect with those talking about the sector on Twitter and LinkedIn.



2 FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE GUIDELINES

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

Since Medical Cannabis became legal in 2018, the Government, NHS, NICE, Royal Colleges, licensed producers of medical cannabis products and training providers have all produced guidelines for clinicians.

What follows is an overview of the guidelines currently available.

MEDICAL CANNABIS GUIDELINES

TITLE	AUTHOR	DATE
Cannabis-based medicinal products: clarification of guidance	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)	March 2021
Recommendations and Guidance on Medical Cannabis under Prescription - V2	The Medical Cannabis Clinicians Society	January 2020
Cannabis-based medicinal products – guideline [NG144]	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)	November 2019
Cannabis-based medicinal products PS05/19	The Royal College of Psychiatrists	November 2019
Use of cannabis-based products in neurology – ABN interim guidelines	Association of British Neurologists	December 2018
Guidance on the use of cannabis-based products for medicinal use in children and young people with epilepsy	British Paediatric Neurology Association	Updated October 2021
Recommendations on cannabis-based products for medicinal use	Royal College of Physicians	October 2018
The supply of unlicensed medicinal products ‘specials’, guidance note 14	Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency	May 2014

3 GET SOME TRAINING AND EXPLORE THE GLOBAL EVIDENCE

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

It is crucial to access robust, evidence-based, CPD-accredited training and product information when learning to prescribe medical cannabis.

TRAINING

MEDICAL CANNABIS EXPLAINED: BECOME A CONFIDENT PRESCRIBER



Exclusively for members of The Medical Cannabis Clinicians Society and in collaboration with Drug Science, join us for interactive online medical cannabis training. The three-hour interactive training session for UK doctors is just £99 to attend. Open to Members.

COURSE FOR DOCTORS AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS



Experts from the Society developed an online medical cannabis course with 20 educational modules for doctors & medical professionals. Open to all.

MEDICAL CANNABIS ESSENTIALS



The Academy of Medical Cannabis has a free introductory course for learners and further paid-for courses for different specialities and clinical areas. Written by Society Chair Professor Mike Barnes and Vice Chair Dr Dani Gordon, the online modules provide essential guidance. Open to all.

TRAINING

Some private medical cannabis clinics including Sapphire Medical Cannabis Clinics, Spectrum Therapeutics and The Medical Cannabis Clinics (via TAOMC) also offer training to doctors face to face, at events and at arranged training sessions.

Know of another training provider offering online medical cannabis education?

Let us know - email contact@ukmccs.org.

EXPLORE AND ADD TO THE EVIDENCE BASE

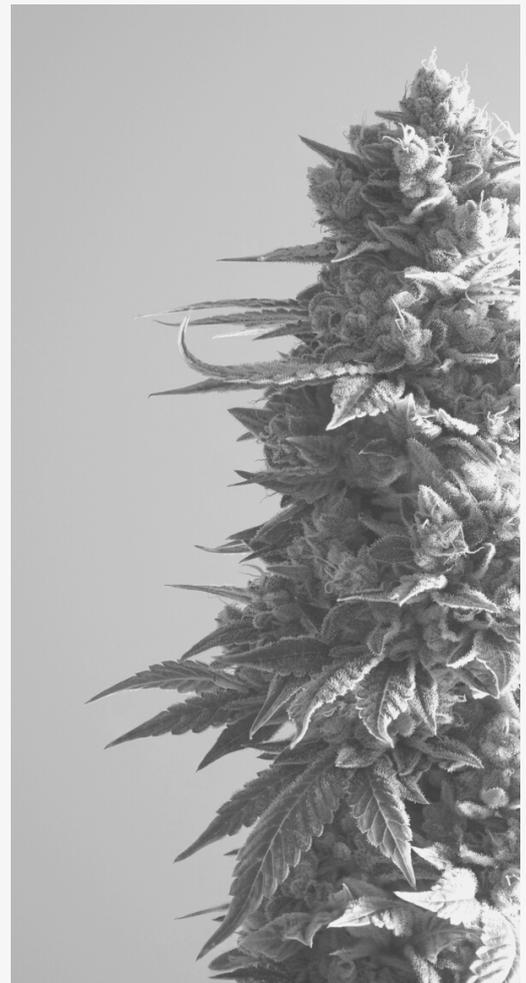
There is a wealth of global evidence available free to explore online - you could start with **Clear**, **NICE** and **TAOMC**. Please **contact us** with any further evidence bases we can include here.

The Medical Cannabis Clinicians Society has developed an independent database of evidence for members which brings together research studies and papers featuring human and animal studies. This gives clinicians the ability to review global published research in one place.

Drug Science's **Project Twenty21** is creating a body of evidence using a real-world data (RWD) registry to document efficacy, safety, quality-adjusted life year and patient reported outcomes with regards to medical cannabis use.

By Spring 2022 it has recruited 2500 patients, creating the largest body of evidence for the effectiveness and tolerability of medical cannabis.

Doctors interested in adding to this evidence base when prescribing medical cannabis to patients should email: prescribers@drugscience.org.uk.



4 LEARN ABOUT CANNABIS-BASED MEDICINAL PRODUCTS, THEIR AVAILABILITY AND INTERACTIONS

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

Your training should include detailed information about products, possible interactions and the current landscape for prescribing as set out below.

Cannabis-based products for medicinal use (CBPMs) are new to the vast majority of prescribing doctors.

According to NHS England, products are classed as CBPMs if they satisfy the following three requirements:

1. The product is or contains cannabis, cannabis resin, cannabidiol or a cannabidiol derivative
2. It is produced for medicinal use in humans; and
3. It is a product that is regulated as a medicinal product, or an ingredient of a medicinal product.

It is important to note that CBD oil products available to purchase without prescription are not classed as medical cannabis as they do not contain THC.

IMPORTING CBPMS INTO THE UK

At the time of writing, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) allow CBPMS to be brought into the country via wholesalers, through a specialist import licence on a prescription-by-prescription basis only.

In late 2019 the first bulk import licence was awarded, which in time should significantly increase the range

of available products and reduce the time patients wait for their medication.

There are now about 18 producers with product in the UK offering 100 different medicines, both flower and oil and limited amounts of soft gel capsules.

Read the MHRA guidance.

AVAILABILITY OF CBPMS

All products are available through importers so you will need to check availability with them directly.

The Medical Cannabis Clinicians Society members contribute to a product list from a range of sources, which is accessed via the member's area of the website.

DRUG INTERACTIONS & ADVERSE EFFECTS

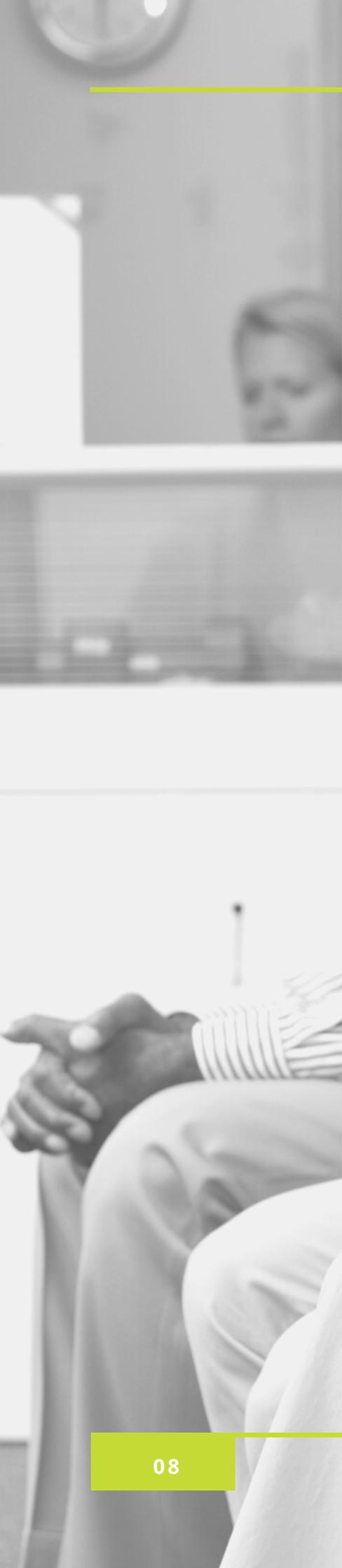
The **NHS Specialist Pharmacy Service** has published information on potential drug interactions for both CBMP and CBD.

- **Cannabidiol oil – potential adverse effects**

Published 29 November 2018, updated 3 January 2020

- **Cannabis – based medicinal products – potential drug interactions**

Published 30 November 2018, updated 10 January 2019



5 FIND SUITABLE PREMISES

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

Doctors wishing to prescribe medical cannabis in the UK must do so from a premises with CQC Registration.

In their November 2019 update, **the CQC stated:**

Specialist doctors who intend to prescribe and treat patients with cannabis-based medicinal products must be able to provide assurance and demonstrate that they deliver safe and effective care in line with relevant legislation and guidance.

Doctors can prescribe medical cannabis:

- From rooms in a private practice or rooms in a clinic with CQC registration
- As an employee of a medical cannabis clinic
- If they have practising privileges or if you have a contract in an existing service with CQC registration

If you would like to see patients in their own home, the CQC Statement of Purpose must include home visits.



6 APPLY FOR YOUR 'PINK PAD'

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

When you have a suitable premise from which to prescribe, you'll need to apply for your private controlled drug prescription pad (CDFP10), often referred to as the 'pink prescription pad'.

1. Find the controlled drug accountable officer (CDAOs are responsible for all aspects of controlled drugs management within their organisation) in the area in which you would like to prescribe.

The CQC holds a register of CDAOs on their website:

www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/controlled-drugs/controlled-drugs-accountable-officers

2. When your application is approved, you will usually wait a few weeks for it to be printed.

Your CDFP10 is sent to the premises from which you are going to practice. It can take up to two months.



7 FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE SPECIALS PRESCRIBING SYSTEM

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

When it comes to accessing the product, after prescribing, it's important that products are prescribed in the best interest of the patient, not because there is any commercial link to the product from the doctor.

Familiarise yourself with the specials prescribing system in **these guidelines from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society**.

This is needed for all unlicensed products which includes all cannabis-based products except Epidiolex and Sativex from GW Pharma which are licensed medicines.

Medical cannabis treatments are classed as a controlled drug so the pharmacist has responsibility to work

through the associated processes.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society has helpful guidance – the **Medicinal Cannabis Pharmacy Alert** – which summarises what pharmacists need to do, on their website.

The best thing to do is speak to your local pharmacy, prior to issuing your first prescription, so they have some warning.

Though it will depend on the pharmacy, speaking to them beforehand is likely to benefit the patient.

Some licensed producers also provide options to deliver their CBMPs directly to patients at home, so this may also be an option depending on what you are prescribing.



8 REVIEW YOUR INDEMNITY INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

In England, doctors working for NHS trusts and health and social care bodies are provided with indemnity insurance through the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts (CNST). Similar arrangements are in place for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

As medical cannabis in the UK is currently only available privately, doctors must have suitable insurance. The GMC state that doctors working in private practice in the UK must have “adequate and appropriate insurance or indemnity arrangements in place covering the full scope of your medical practice”.

This means that even if doctors are working privately within an NHS or health and social care body premises, they must still be covered.

If you already have insurance in place, review the terms of your coverage. If you’re looking for insurance which covers medical cannabis prescriptions, read the **Society's insurance guide at www.ukmccs.org** which includes links to insurance brokers with medical cannabis in their coverage. The Society has good links with Towergate Insurance who can organise cannabis cover for private doctors and clinics.



9 START SEEING PATIENTS

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

Assuming you have met all the above requirements, you will now be in the position to prescribe for your first patient.

Doctors must ensure:

- They have discussed medical cannabis treatment options in full with the patient
- Patients have tried at least some of the licensed treatments available to them
- Medical cannabis treatment is in the patient's best interest.

When you have satisfied these requirements:

1. **Write the prescription.** The prescription will need to be approved by a peer panel of prescribing doctors or clinicians before being available to the patient. Most private clinics have this system available and now there is similar support for individual doctors.
2. Let your patient know they can take the prescription to **any pharmacy**. You may wish to share your knowledge about local pharmacies or previous experiences with chemists in their area. Many clinics have linked pharmacies although there must be no obligation that the linked clinic will be used.
3. **Arrange a follow-up appointment** with the patient.



10 SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR PEERS

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

In the UK, prescribing medical cannabis for patients is at a very early stage.

It's so important that clinicians share their experience of the sector, treatments and products and patient outcomes with their peers, so doctors can benefit from each other's knowledge.

You may wish to talk about your experience with applying for your pink pad, discuss the arrangement with your premises or share what your patient felt about different products.

A good way to do this is via the Medical Cannabis Clinicians Society's **secure peer support group for members**.

11 COMMIT TO YOUR CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HOW TO PRESCRIBE MEDICAL CANNABIS IN THE UK

Commit to your ongoing learning about this rapidly changing field.

Stay up to date with the developments in legislation by signing up to our newsletter.

Members of the Society have access to hours of webinar recordings within the Member's Area.

A RESOURCE FOR THE SECTOR

HELP US PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION



The Medical Cannabis Clinicians Society is an expert-led, not-for-profit community, dedicated to bringing this safe, legal and effective medicine to people living with chronic conditions.

How to begin prescribing medical cannabis will be updated regularly, so please don't hesitate to email us to request further information, share content for the next version or to suggest a revision.

- Have we missed something?
- Are you still looking for answers?
- Did we get something wrong?

Please let us know. Email us at contact@ukmccs.org, get in touch via our website or @ukmccs on Twitter.

THE MEDICAL CANNABIS CLINICIANS SOCIETY

INDEPENDENT, EXPERT SUPPORT FOR CLINICIANS

The Medical Cannabis Clinicians Society is an independent community of medical cannabis pioneers – the first prescribers of this treatment in the UK.

We believe that every patient who could benefit from medical cannabis should have access to it.

We provide the medical and scientific community interested in supporting patients with medical cannabis with high-quality training and expert support.

Membership is open to those with a professional interest in medical cannabis, including clinicians, nurses, GPs, allied health professionals (AHPs), medical students, healthcare scientists, pharmacists and those working across acute, primary and community healthcare.

As part of the UK's leading group of medical cannabis experts, members have access to information to inform treatment decisions, up-to-date product guidance and support to ensure clinicians can become as confident in prescribing medical cannabis as they are with first line treatments.

With the most respected medical cannabis clinicians in the country providing support, members are better able to help their patients.

Annual membership is £90 for consultants, GPs and others and £45 for nurses and AHPs. Membership is free for medical students and we welcome international members.

Join online at www.ukmccs.org.

OUR WORK IS MADE POSSIBLE BY UNRESTRICTED EDUCATIONAL GRANT FUNDING FROM SUPPORTERS.

Meet **our supporters** and learn **how you can help**.

