

# Remote Worker Prescribing Policy

November | 2018

**Responsible Committee:** Clinical Governance Committee

**Date Effective:** November 2018

**Supersedes:** January 2015

**Next Review Due:** November 2019

**Version Number:** 2.0

**Comments (details of change):**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

South East London Doctors Co-operative (SELDOC) provides out-of-hours and unscheduled primary care services to patients registered with a GP practice in Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark and Sutton PCT and unregistered patients residing within its boundaries.

Recently SELDOC has developed and implemented a change in working practice where Duty Doctors may be providing services at locations other than the base site in Dulwich Community Hospital. This service is usually provided from a clinician's home and is referred to as '**remote working**' in this policy.

During the course of providing a service through remote working, it may become necessary to initiate a prescription for medicines.

## 2. LEGAL, ETHICAL AND GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR PRESCRIBING

The law relating to prescribing of medicines is detailed in the Medicines Act 1968<sup>1</sup>, the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971 (as amended)<sup>2</sup> and the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001<sup>3</sup> and the General Medical Council (GMC) expects doctors to comply with the standards of good practice set out in their guidance – *Good practice in prescribing medicines – guidance for doctors*<sup>4</sup>.

## 3. KEY PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER

The documents cited above are clear on the following principles:

If you are the doctor signing and issuing the prescription you bear the legal and professional responsibility for that treatment

## 4. KEY POINTS FOR REMOTE WORKING DOCTORS WHO WISH TO INITIATE A PRESCRIPTION

SELDOC expects the following principles to be followed by all remote working doctors:

- 4.1 The legal responsibility for the prescription lies with the person who signs the prescription.
- 4.2 The remote working doctor must document a detailed record of the consultation ensuring that ALL of the following information is available to the base/advice doctor signing the prescription
  - complete patient details (name, age, address)
  - complete drug history details including previous adverse reactions

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/67/contents>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1971/38/contents>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2001/3998/contents/made>

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical\\_guidance/prescriptions\\_faqs.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/prescriptions_faqs.asp)

- recent use of other medicines such as non-prescription and herbal medicines
  - known medicines sensitivities or allergies – ‘none known’ must be stated if appropriate
  - adequate assessment of the patient’s conditions and current symptoms
- 4.3 The doctor (known as the base/advice doctor) allocated to review and sign the prescription initiated by the remote working doctor should not do so unless they can be convinced that all relevant information has been collected and accurately documented on Adastra (the electronic database)
- 4.4 The remote working doctor must explain to the caller that another doctor may contact them for further information if necessary to allow a prescription to be issued.
- 4.5 The base doctor will only sign a prescription for all medicines not included in the SELDOC formulary when they are convinced of the need for a medicine to be issued before the next working day and all the information in section 4.2 is available to them.