

## **Administration of drugs by Paramedics and Student Paramedics**

The College of Paramedics statement issued on the website aims to clarify the legal position of registered paramedics and student paramedics in the administration of drugs, specifically those listed in Schedule 5 Part III of the Prescription Only Medicines (Human Use) Order 1997 which provides legal exemption for paramedics. In seeking to clarify the legal requirements the College of Paramedic's position is that all its members (full and student) should practice within the letter and spirit of the law and where necessary it will issue advice on how to do this. If paramedic practice and education is unduly restricted by the law then we will seek to lobby parliament to have changes made.

Unlike other healthcare professionals paramedics gain important legal exemptions at the point of registration. All other professions (except medical doctors, dentists and midwives) must complete post-registration courses or access further legal instruments (e.g. Patient Group Directives) to administer medicines without a medical prescription. Paramedics do not have prescriber status and as such cannot direct others to administer prescription only medicines (POMs) on their behalf. This includes directing: ambulance technicians, nurses, assistant practitioners and students studying to become paramedics. Those studying to become paramedics and those who support them should be aware that their course of study confers no legal status within medicines regulations legislation.

It should be noted that when working in other placements, such as hospital theatres, students will usually be supervised by a medical prescriber. As such they can administer any medicines as directed by that prescriber- although they should remain within their scope of practice.

Provision 7 of the Prescription Only Medicines (Human Use) Order 1997 lists those POMs that can be administered parenterally by anyone for the purpose of saving life, this includes ambulance technicians, assistant practitioners, student paramedics, first aiders and members of the public. When working in a clinical setting all members (full, associate or student) are subject to their employer's clinical governance and therefore should make themselves familiar with, and act within, the policies of that organisation related to what they can or cannot administer.

Matt Capsey  
MCPara, PA 14551

Senior Lecturer in Paramedic Science  
Governing Council Member (North East)  
College of Paramedics

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