



**Scottish
Ambulance
Service**

Working in Partnership with Universities



Patient Group Direction PGD230
FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OR SUPPLY OF PARACETAMOL

Staff Grade:	Qualified and Year Two Trainee: Advanced Paramedic Practitioners Advanced Nurse Practitioners (Urgent and Primary Care)
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Document Author(s) / Owner	
Version	1.0
Issue Date	28/03/2025
Review Date	28/03/2028
Division / Organisation Wide	Advanced Practice (Urgent & Primary Care) only

Health Care Professionals must be HCPC or NMC registered and authorised by name under this PGD before attempting to treat any patient according to it and have signed the relevant declaration.

Before using this PGD, healthcare professionals must ensure they are working within their scope of practice and be competent in the treatment of patients identified as suitable for inclusion under this PGD.

“Your scope of practice is the limit of your knowledge, skills and experience and is made up of the activities you carry out within your professional role. As a health and care professional, you must keep within your scope of practice at all times to ensure you are practising safely, lawfully and effectively. This is likely to change over time as your knowledge, skills and experience develop.” (HCPC 2024)

Staff should not deviate from their training, guidelines and scope of practice without taking professional clinical advice. All staff are expected to maintain their fitness to practice and undertake appropriate professional development to allow them to be fit for the role in which they are practising.

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1. Document Control Sheet

1.1 Key Information

Title:	Patient Group Direction PGD230 Paracetamol
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1.2 Revision History

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Name	Changes Marked
0.1	01/10/2024	Initial draft		N/A
1.0	26/03/2025	Updated to approved version no., guidance comments removed		Yes
1.0	01/05/2025	First issue – supersedes entry in PGD003		Yes

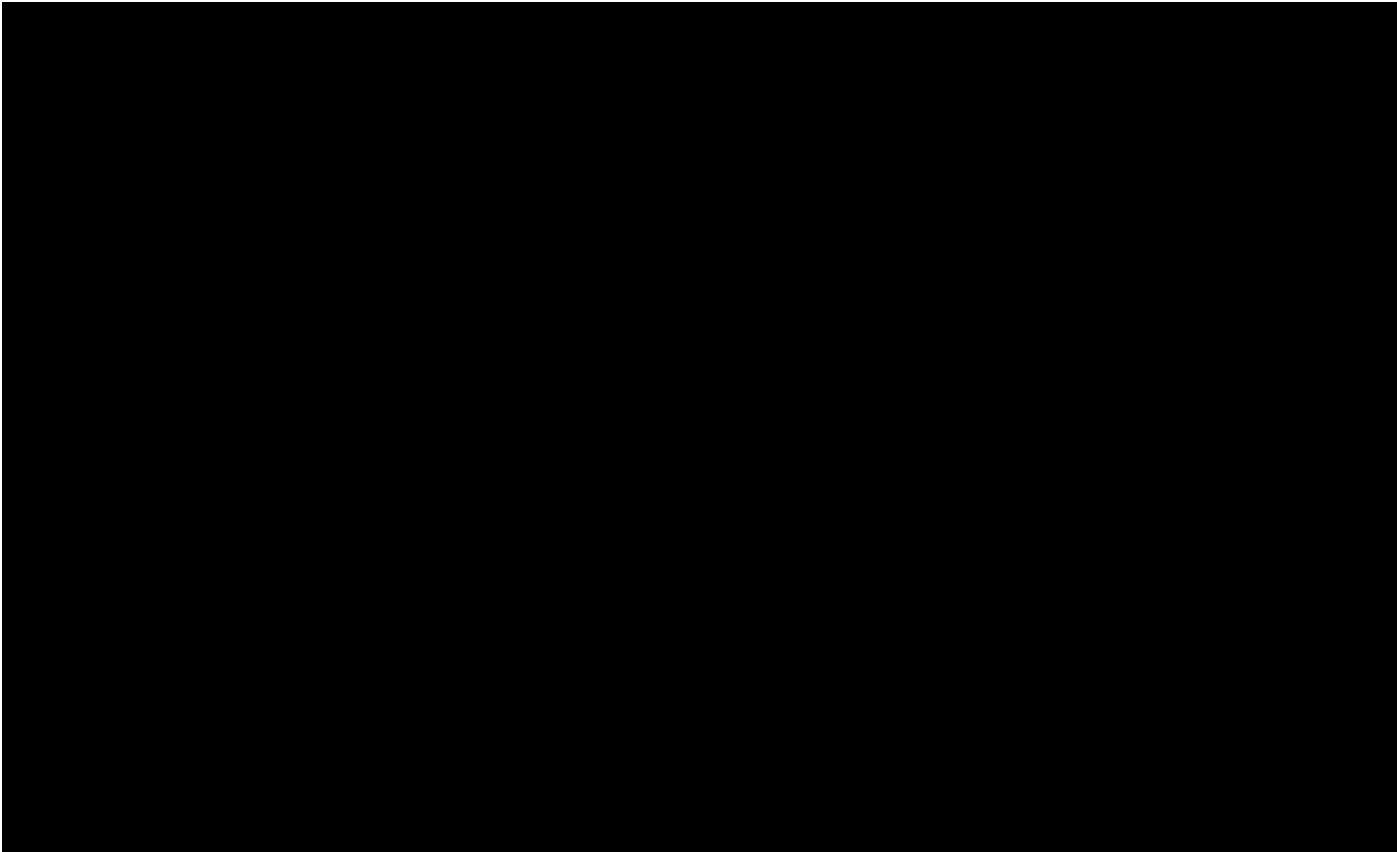
1.3 Approvals: This document requires the following approvals:

Name	Date	Version
National Advanced Practice Clinical Lead	30/01/2025	1.0
Medicines Management Group	30/01/2025	1.0
Pharmaceutical Advisor	03/03/2025	1.0
Medical Director	27/02/2025	1.0

1.4 Distribution: This document has been distributed to:

Name	Date	Version
Medicines Management Group	28/03/2025	1.0
Advanced Practice Leadership Team	28/03/2025	1.0
All Advanced Practitioners (UPC) & trainees	28/03/2025	1.0

1.5 Names and signatures of professionals drawing up the protocol



1.6 Professional / Advisory groups which have approved the protocol

Scottish Ambulance Service Medicines Management Group	Date	30/01/2025
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2. Using this PGD for Administration and/or Supply of Medicines

3. Characteristics of Staff

Qualifications required	Qualified and Year Two Trainee: Advanced Paramedic Practitioners Advanced Nurse Practitioners (in Urgent and Primary Care)
Specific or additional experience / training required	Undertaken an SCQF Level 11 module in Advanced Clinical Assessment (or equivalent) which included a period of supervised practice and signed off as competent. Passed all relevant written and practical assessments and ratified by a university exam board. Familiarisation with the signs and symptoms of conditions listed in “Criteria for Inclusion” in this PGD and possible differential diagnoses. Familiarisation with the use of Paracetamol, its indications, contra-indications and other details.
Continuing training requirements	The clinician should be aware of any changes to the evidence base for treatment conditions listed in “Criteria for Inclusion” in this PGD. The individual clinician is responsible for their own CPD and for keeping up to date with the use of medicine(s) in this PGD.
Other	You must be authorised by name under the current version of this PGD before you attempt to work to it

4. Clinical Situations / Conditions to Which the Patient Group Direction Applies

Definition of condition / situation to be treated	<p>Mild to moderate pain including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache• Toothache• Backache• Rheumatic and musculoskeletal pain• Dysmenorrhoea• Pain and discomfort from colds, flu and infections <p>Pyrexia <u>with</u> pain or discomfort</p>
Criteria for inclusion	<p>Adults 16 years and over with any of the above condition / symptoms.</p> <p>Appropriate safety-netting can be made.</p> <p>Can be used in combination with other suitable analgesics as part of a balanced analgesic regimen.</p>
Criteria for exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children under 16 years of age• Informed non-consent• Known allergy to Paracetamol or any excipients or ingredients in the preparation• Known severe hepatic impairment• Use of any Paracetamol-containing products within the last four hours, or the cumulative daily dose already taken – note that this excludes administration to the patient, they may still be supplied with Paracetamol for later use• Pyrexia <u>without</u> pain or discomfort• Significantly unwell or injured patients requiring further assessment (blood tests, x-ray, etc.) or admission
Action if patient is excluded or declines treatment	<p>Document in ePR / patient record. Discuss alternatives with patient / carer as appropriate and advise on risks of declining treatment. Consider referral to primary care or a community pharmacy. If necessary, consider referral or transfer to a suitable receiving unit.</p>

5. Description of Treatment (including dosage and administration)

Name, form(s) and strength(s) of medicine	Paracetamol 500mg tablets Paracetamol 500mg caplets Paracetamol 500mg capsules
Legal status	POM for supply of up to 100 tablets / caplets / capsules P for supply of packs up to 32 tablets / caplets / capsules GSL for supply of packs of 16 tablets / caplets / capsules
Is the use outwith the SmPC?	No
Storage requirements	Room temperature
Route(s) / method(s) of administration	Oral administration only – may be taken with or without a drink
Dose and frequency of administration	Patients weighing over 50kg (7st 12lb): 1g (two tablets / caplets / capsules) every 4-6 hours as required up to a maximum of 4g (eight tablets / caplets / capsules) in 24 hours Patients weighing under 50kg (7st 12lb): 500mg (one tablets / caplets / capsules) every 4-6 hours as required up to a maximum of 2g (four tablets / caplets / capsules) in 24 hours
Maximum dose and number of treatments	As above. Maximum supply is one full box (normally 32 tablets / caplets / capsules).

6. Cautions and Identification & Management of Adverse Reactions

Cautions	<p>Should be used with caution in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patients with chronic alcohol consumption• Chronic dehydration or malnutrition (use smaller dose)• Patients using any anticoagulant medicines, especially low molecular weight heparins and Phenindione – short courses are safe• Patients taking Imatinib (leukaemia specialist drug)• In some parts of the world (in particular North America) Paracetamol is known as Acetaminophen – clinicians should be aware of this when treating patients who live or are visiting from overseas, or have recently returned from overseas having used medicines there
Drug interactions	<p>Patients also taking a course of Flucloxacillin. The risk is greater in long-term use than with a normal antibiotic course and in patients with significant renal dysfunction. It is recommended that if they are both required, they are not taken together</p>
Identification and management of adverse reactions	<p>Anaphylactic reactions to Paracetamol, especially oral tablets, are extremely rare and should be managed as per standard protocol / JRCALC guidance.</p> <p>Rare or very rare side-effects include: Thrombocytopaenia</p> <p>A detailed list of adverse reactions can be found in the product's SmPC and PIL, see references below.</p> <p>Any adverse reactions, and action taken, are recorded in the patient's notes and other appropriate documentation e.g.: clinical incident form, Yellow Card scheme, etc.</p>

7. Patient Advice and Documentation

Patient advice (verbal and written)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain treatment plan and gain consent • Clinician should inform the patient / carer of the realistic timeframe for improvement of symptoms being treated • Must see medical practitioner if symptoms worsen or do not resolve within the expected timeframe • Advise that Paracetamol is highly dangerous in overdose • Advise that the patient <u>must not</u> take any other paracetamol-containing products and that not all items are obvious that they contain Paracetamol. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ combination medicines such as Co-codamol or Co-dydramol ◦ branded medicines such as Alka-Seltzer, Anadin, Benylin, Calpol, Migralve, Night Nurse, Nuromol, Solpadol, Sudafed (refer them to the specific ingredients) ◦ medicinal items such as Beechams or Lemsip drinks or similar • Advised to be especially cautious regarding any medicines purchased overseas which may include Paracetamol or Acetaminophen • Advised to avoid alcohol while taking Paracetamol • Advise to contact GP / nurse / pharmacist / out-of-hours service if side effects occur • Advised to call 999 if any life-threatening side-effects occur • Patients should be given a copy of the manufacturer's Patient Information Leaflet where available or signposted to an electronic copy if not • Patients should be advised to maintain adequate hydration
Arrangements for referral to medical advice	Local arrangements apply
Additional facilities / supplies required	<p>Drinking water (if required).</p> <p>Paracetamol is available in multiple other forms not covered by this PGD, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1g oral tablet (500mg tablets offer better value for money) • 80mg, 120mg, 125mg, 240mg, 250mg, 500mg and 1g suppositories • 100mg/10ml ampoules for infusion (not recommended for out of hospital use) <p>And for patients unable to swallow tablets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500mg and 1g effervescent tablets • 250mg orodispersible tablets (Calpol Fastmelts) • 120mg/5ml, 250mg/5ml and 500mg/5ml oral suspension • 120mg/5ml and 500mg/5ml oral solution <p><u>Single doses</u> of oral Paracetamol tablet(s) or suspension may be given to children between the ages of 3 months and 16 years in</p>

	<p>accordance with the guidance in the JRCALC app, they <u>cannot</u> be supplied under this PGD.</p> <p>If any of the above are required, refer to the patient's GP or a SAS prescriber.</p> <p>Paracetamol is available, and in use in SAS, as an 1g/100ml intravenous infusion which is not covered by this PGD – refer to guidance on the JRCALC app.</p> <p>SAS APs will normally only carry Paracetamol 500mg caplets but 500mg tablets and 500mg capsules have been included in this PGD in case of supply issues.</p>
Monitoring	No specific monitoring required
Follow up	No specific follow-up required
Details of treatment records required	<p>The ePR, or other patient record, must contain the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of the HCP using this PGD • Patient's name, address and date of birth. CHI number is also preferred • Name of medication and expiry date • Date and time of administration / supply • Dose (and volume if liquid preparation), form and route (and site if parenteral) of administration • If supplying medicine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dose and frequency to take ○ Number of items supplied • That it is administered and/or supplied under this PGD and not prescribed or via an exemption <p>The ePR, or other patient record, must also contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The patient's medical and medication history • Medication and safety-netting / worsening advice given to the patient / carer <p>All records must be clear, legible and contemporaneous.</p>

8. References and Further Reading

NICE Medicines Practice Guideline MPG2: Patient group directions

[Overview](#) | [Patient group directions](#) | [Guidance](#) | [NICE](#)

Paracetamol in BNF

[Paracetamol](#) | [Drugs](#) | [BNF](#) | [NICE](#)

Paracetamol on EMC

[Paracetamol 500mg Tablets SmPC](#) ([medicines.org.uk](https://www.medicines.org.uk))

[Paracetamol 500mg Tablets Patient Information Leaflet](#) ([medicines.org.uk](https://www.medicines.org.uk))

[Paracetamol 500mg Caplets SmPC](#) ([medicines.org.uk](https://www.medicines.org.uk))

[Paracetamol 500mg Caplets Patient Information Leaflet](#) ([medicines.org.uk](https://www.medicines.org.uk))

[Paracetamol 500mg Capsules SmPC](#) ([medicines.org.uk](https://www.medicines.org.uk))

[Paracetamol 500mg Capsules Patient Information Leaflet](#) ([medicines.org.uk](https://www.medicines.org.uk))

BNF Treatment Summaries

[Analgesics](#) | [Treatment summaries](#) | [BNF](#) | [NICE](#)

[Analgesics](#) | [Nurse Prescribers' Formulary](#) | [BNF](#) | [NICE](#)

[Pain, chronic](#) | [Treatment summaries](#) | [BNF](#) | [NICE](#)

NICE Clinical Knowledge Summary/Summaries (CKS)

[Analgesia - mild-to-moderate pain](#) | [Health topics A to Z](#) | [CKS](#) | [NICE](#)

[Headache - tension-type](#) | [Health topics A to Z](#) | [CKS](#) | [NICE](#)

NICE Clinical Guidelines

[CG173 Neuropathic pain in adults: Pharmacological management in non-specialist settings](#) | [Guidance](#) | [NICE](#)

[NG59 Low back pain and sciatica in over 16s: Assessment and management](#) | [Guidance](#) | [NICE](#)

[NG193 Chronic pain \(primary and secondary\) in over 16s: Assessment of all chronic pain and management of chronic primary pain](#) | [Guidance](#) | [NICE](#)

Other Useful Links

[Paracetamol](#) | [NHS inform](#)

[Unintentional overdose of paracetamol in adults with low bodyweight](#) (hssib.org.uk)