

Guidance to support Standard 11: Medication relating to the occasional administration of non-prescribed paracetamol oral suspension to children



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years: latest changes

The Welsh Government have been notified by the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW) of concerns relating to children's health and well-being within registered child minding and daycare settings ("registered settings"). In particular the concerns relate to the administration of **non-prescribed** paracetamol oral suspension ("Liquid Paracetamol") by registered settings to children.

Children's health needs to be protected at all times. Therefore, children should be able to receive prompt treatment for the relief of pain or high temperature whilst in registered settings, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions for the administration of Liquid Paracetamol and subject to the consent of the child's parent/carer.

This guidance describes situations in which the administration of **Liquid Paracetamol [1]** is considered acceptable and supplements the current **Standard 11: Medication** in National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Regulated Childcare for children up to 12 years **published** November 2023. This guidance is effective immediately. The Standard relating to medication will be updated in line with a wider cyclical review and consultation on the NMS in due course.

The concerns highlighted by CIW have led to calls for clarification regarding what registered settings can and cannot do in relation to the administration of Liquid Paracetamol in accordance with **Standard 11: Medication**. Specific clarification is required regarding whether Liquid Paracetamol, which has not been prescribed for a child, can be obtained, stored and administered to children when appropriate safeguards are in place.

[1] For the purposes of this guidance Liquid Paracetamol refers to individual 5mL sachets of paracetamol sugar free oral suspension each containing 120mg of paracetamol per 5mL, only.

Currently, **Standard 11: Medication** allows for the provision of prescribed medication for relevant children but does not specifically refer to non-prescribed medication.

This circular provides updated guidance for registered settings to obtain, store and administer Liquid Paracetamol subject to the following General conditions **and** Liquid Paracetamol-specific conditions being met:

General conditions

- The registered setting has a medicine policy which describes the circumstances in which Liquid Paracetamol may be administered to a child who is attending the setting;
- The medicine policy has been shared with the parent/carer and sets out the arrangements and procedures in place to support the safe administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication, including when there is an urgent need whilst a child is being cared for at the registered setting, for example, in the event of a child having a high temperature; and
- The child's parents/carers have given permission for the registered setting to administer Liquid Paracetamol to the relevant child in the circumstances described in the medicine policy.

Conditions relating to each occasion Liquid Paracetamol is administered

In situations where a child becomes unwell whilst at the registered setting, it is most appropriate for the child to be collected by a parent or carer. However, in circumstances where:

1. there may be a delay in the parent or carer collecting the child or arranging collection by someone else; or
2. the parent or carer is not immediately contactable,

It is appropriate for the child to be given a **single (age appropriate) dose of Liquid Paracetamol** whilst the child waits to be collected if:

1. the child's parent or carer has given prior consent to their child being given Liquid Paracetamol;

and either

2. the child's parent or carer has been contacted;
3. the child's parent or carer has given consent for the dose of paracetamol to be given;
4. a period of at least 4 hours has passed since the last dose of paracetamol was given to the child; and
5. the parent or carer has undertaken to collect the child from the registered setting as soon as is practicable;

or

6. the registered setting has attempted to contact the child's parent or carer, but they cannot be contacted;
7. the registered setting has contacted NHS111;
8. a healthcare professional (at NHS111) has advised that it would be appropriate for a dose of Liquid Paracetamol to be given; and
9. the registered setting subsequently makes contact with the child's parent or carer to arrange for the child to be collected from the registered setting at the earliest opportunity/as soon as is practicable.

In addition to the above, registered settings must continue to adhere to **Standard 10.2** which states:

“No child is received if he/she appears to be ill. If children become unwell during their time in the childcare or play setting, care is taken to prevent possible infection of other children and parents are notified as soon as possible.”

It must not be assumed that a child is better after receiving Liquid Paracetamol and in all cases the child should be collected by a parent/carer as soon as is practicable after the child becomes unwell.

Storage, Administration and Record Keeping

The Welsh Government recommends that registered providers obtain, store and administer Liquid Paracetamol in the limited circumstances described in this guidance.

Registered settings should purchase sachets of paracetamol sugar free oral suspension each containing 120mg of paracetamol in each 5mL sachet. Advice about purchasing Liquid Paracetamol can be obtained from any pharmacy.

The registered setting must ensure arrangements are in place for the safe storage, administration and record keeping of doses of Liquid Paracetamol used in accordance with the medicine policy.

The expiry dates of all stocked medicines must be checked regularly (at least every three months), and before each administration.

All doses of Liquid Paracetamol given to a child at a registered setting in accordance with this guidance, must be recorded at the time of administration.

The administration of Liquid Paracetamol is reserved for urgent situations in which it is impracticable for a child's parents/carers to collect the child promptly and only where such administration is in accordance with the guidance set out in this letter.