

# Improved system for people to report suspected side effects

Improved system for people to report suspected side effects from their medicines to UK health watchdog

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) recently launched a new UK-wide pilot to enable people to directly report their experiences of suspected side effects from medicines through its reporting system - the Yellow Card Scheme.

The improved system will see patient Yellow Card reporting forms being made available in pharmacies, GP surgeries and other NHS outlets across the UK from November 2005. Reports on suspected side effects can also be made on the Yellow Card website at [www.yellowcard.gov.uk](http://www.yellowcard.gov.uk) or by freephone to the Yellow Card hotline on 0808 100 3352.

The UK-wide pilot builds on the successful patient reporting pilot run from January which was restricted to certain parts of the UK, and the wide range of feedback provided from

patients and carers in the development of mechanisms for reporting suspected side effects.

Professor Kent Woods, Chief Executive at the MHRA said, "I welcome the launch of this UK-wide pilot enabling people to report their suspected side effects to us. By inviting people to report their experiences, not only are we able to gain better insights into the safety of medicines, but we can more directly involve people in medicines regulation."

Chairman of the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM), Professor Gordon Duff said, "The benefits of encouraging patients to complete Yellow Card reports are becoming evident. Patients provide a different and extremely useful insight into suspected side effects that we cannot easily get from Yellow Card reports from health professionals. The Yellow Card Scheme is vital in monitoring the safety of medicines in the UK, and

the incorporation of patient reporting into the Yellow Card Scheme will have significant benefits, especially as the scheme evolves and patients become familiar with it. The contributions of the Committee on Safety of Medicines' Patient Reporting Working Group have been extremely beneficial in helping to develop systems for patient reporting."

Dr Patricia Wilkie, Chairman of the CSM's Working Group on Patient Reporting said, "Patient reporting through the Yellow Card Scheme helps the MHRA to collect information on suspected side effects that patients have experienced, from the patient's own perspective. The incorporation of the patient experience in the Yellow Card Scheme is essential for medicines safety monitoring, and will be important for the development of information for patients about their medicines. The launch of the UK-wide pilot is a major step forward in achieving real patient involvement".