

## Covert Medication – An Overview

### Step 1

- There must be an assessment of the individual's mental capacity; if they have mental capacity to make decisions about their own care and treatment, covert medication should NEVER be considered. The assessment should be written up and included in the care plan.

### Step 2

- If the person lacks capacity, there should be a best interest meeting to consider whether covert medication is appropriate, following the principles in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and applying section 4, the 'best interest' checklist. This should include care home staff, the GP or other prescribing professional, a family member or representative, and where appropriate the individual's advocate or social worker. The information must be recorded, including the proposed management of covert medication and when it will be reviewed.

### Step 3

- If the DOLS assessor has not been involved in the initial best interest meeting you MUST notify the supervisory body (your local authority) as this may trigger a review of the DOLS authorisation. Following the case of AG v BMBC and SNH [2016] if a standard authorisation is longer than six months there should be regular, possibly monthly, reviews of the care plan. A Best Interest Assessor can include conditions around the use of covert medication where appropriate.

### Step 4

- There should be regular reviews of the covert medication plan that includes family, or other representatives and healthcare professionals. Reviews should be noted in the care plan, including a consideration of why covert medication continues to be the least restrictive option that is currently available. If there is a significant change in the type of medication prescribed, the care home MUST refer the individual's case back to the DOLS supervisory body as this may trigger a review. If in doubt, refer to the supervisory body.

### Finally

- Ensure that you keep detailed, accurate records
- Ensure that you have a medication policy that includes the use of covert administration for medication
- If in doubt, contact our Health and Community Care Team on 01926 491181