Prescriber Regulation Change for Schedule 8 Stimulants – FAQs

Changes have been made to the *Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 2026* to exempt prescribers from requiring a section 18A (s18A) authority when prescribing schedule 8 stimulants in accordance with the Monitored Drugs Prescribing Code (the Prescribing Code). This fact sheet provides answers to common questions that prescribers may have about these changes.

What happens to my existing s18A authority to prescribe schedule 8 drugs of dependence?

Your existing authority still applies until its expiry date, and you must continue to comply with all the conditions on the authority until the expiry date.

How often does my patient need to be reviewed by a specialist?

Ongoing specialist review is not required if prescribing meets the Prescribing Code.

If you are a GP that is not trained in ADHD diagnosis, specialist diagnosis is required (as per the Prescribing Code). It is up to the prescriber's clinical discretion to decide if ongoing specialist review is necessary.

I have already applied for an authority for a patient where prescribing meets the Prescribing Code, how will I be informed if the authority is not required?

If your application is assessed as not required, the SA Health Drugs of Dependence Unit (DDU) will write to you via **Script**Check**SA** advising that the application has been cancelled as it meets the Prescribing Code criteria.

What is the Privileged Circular, and how do I know if my patient is listed?

If a person has been determined on reasonable grounds as having:

- a history of consuming drugs in a quantity or manner that presents a risk to their health, or
- obtained or attempted to obtain drugs by false pretences or other unlawful means, or
- obtained or attempted to obtain drugs for an unlawful purpose,

section 58 of the *Controlled Substances Act 1984 (SA)* allows information to be published to help limit further supply of potentially harmful drugs to that person.

The online Privileged Circular is integrated into **Script**Check**SA**. If a person is listed on the Circular, a blue badge can be seen in their **Script**Check**SA** profile and a high-risk (red) alert will be triggered if monitored drugs are prescribed or dispensed. More information can be found in the Privileged Circular accordion of their profile. If your patient is listed on the privileged circular, you will need to apply for a s18A authority.

My patient is turning 19 and no longer under the care of a paediatrician, do they require an updated assessment?

No, only an initial diagnosis is required. A review may be beneficial but is at the discretion of the prescriber.

My patient has a historic diagnosis of ADHD, do they require an updated assessment?

No, however, you are required to have evidence of the patient's diagnosis.

When is a patient considered drug dependent?

A person is drug dependent if they have acquired, as a result of the repeated administration of prescription drugs or controlled drugs, an overpowering desire for the continued administration of such drugs and is likely to suffer mental or physical distress or disorder upon cessation of the administration of the drug; or have consumed prescribed drugs in a manner that presents a risk to their health.

Do I still have to check Script Check**SA if I don't need a s18A authority?**

Yes. As set out in the *Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 2026, regulation 37 and 39,* before a prescriber gives a person a prescription for the supply of a monitored drug, the prescriber must take all reasonable steps to check relevant information held in **Script**Check**SA** relating to the person.

How do I find a GP trained in ADHD diagnosis?

GPs who have completed the South Australia ADHD GP training program are listed on the RACGP website.

I'm a nurse practitioner, do I need an authority if my patient meets the requirements in the Prescribing Code?

Yes. Nurse practitioners need to apply for a s18A authority unless another exemption applies.

If prescribing under the Prescribing Code, do I still need a PBS authority?

Prescribing under the Prescribing Code does not alter any existing PBS requirements. For further enquiries, please contact the PBS on 1800 020 613.

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