

# PRACTICAL PRESCRIBING

## Molly Courtenay helps resolve everyday issues for nurse prescribers



**Q** I am in the process of setting up a 'new entrants' community based service which aims to support new arrivals into

the country by offering a health access service.

**One of the objectives of this scheme is to decrease the incidence of TB. Can a nurse independent prescriber (NIP) write a Patient Specific Direction for the Mantoux test,**

**which uses a tuberculin that is unlicensed in the UK?**

**A** A qualified nurse independent prescriber is able to delegate or give directions for the administration of a licensed medicine that he or she has prescribed and that is within their area of competence.<sup>1</sup>

The nurse is, of course, accountable for the action they have taken and so therefore must be satisfied that the person to whom these instructions are given, is competent to administer the medicine prescribed.

In 2005, the government switched from HEAF tests to Mantoux tests. The Mantoux test uses a tuberculin that is not licensed in the UK.

Advice given at this time, caused confusion with regards to whether or not independent prescribers were able to prescribe and/or administer this test.

As the Mantoux test is unlicensed in this country, it was finally agreed that they are not able to do so.

Therefore, with regards to the new entrants scheme you have described, a nurse independent

prescriber would not be able to write a Patient Specific Direction for the Mantoux test.

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### Reference

1. Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2006). Standards of proficiency for nurse and midwife prescribers. London: NMC