Alternatives to common palliative care drugs: Strong opioids via syringe driver

**Strong opioids – syringe drivers**

Unable to obtain syringe driver equipment

Is absorption or swallowing of oral meds an issue?  
- Yes  
  - Switch to equivalent dose fentanyl or buprenorphine patch*
- If eGFR >40  
  - switch to equivalent dose oral morphine sulphate MR *
- If eGFR <40  
  - switch to equivalent dose oral oxycodone MR*

Unable to obtain usual subcutaneous (SC) opioid

Switch to alternative preparation of same drug available at equivalent dose (as per BNF)

If eGFR >40:
- On SC morphine sulphate – switch to equivalent dose SC diamorphine*
- On SC diamorphine – switch to equivalent dose SC morphine sulphate*
- On SC oxycodone – switch to either of above*

If eGFR <40:
- On SC morphine sulphate or diamorphine – switch to equivalent dose SC oxycodone*
- On SC oxycodone – speak to Specialist Palliative Care Team regarding alternatives. Do not switch to e.g. alfentanil without specialist advice

Still unavailable

*please see MD161 Opioid conversion table in toolkit