



NECS supports the NHS England Area Team Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer in ensuring the safe management and use of controlled drugs within the North East & Cumbria region. Based on the commonly reported incidents and the lessons learned, we aim to share good practice across the region

Medicines for Palliative Care

Access to palliative care medications and proactive management of symptom control for patients are key components of good practice. Demand for medicines may be urgent and/or unpredictable and so a number of systems and processes are in existence to support prescribers and community pharmacies to ensure that medicines are available to patients in their time of need.

For many CCGs, arrangements exist with community pharmacies for them to stock an agreed range of palliative care medicines. Where there are gaps in provision, CCGs are working with LPCs to address this.

Actions for Practices

Which medicines, which pharmacies?

Find out from your palliative care team or from your Local Pharmaceutical Committee:

- ◆ which medicines are on your local list of medicines stocked by the participating pharmacies
- ◆ which community pharmacies have agreed to stock the medicines on the list

Prescribing palliative care medicines:

- ◆ Prescribe from the list whenever possible
- ◆ Make sure you know how to correctly prescribe medicines on the community palliative care prescription chart
- ◆ Prescribe sufficient medicines to meet the anticipated needs, particularly to cover weekends. (It is important to try to strike a balance between making sure that the patient has sufficient medicines, and the risk of oversupply, leading to excess stock in the home and increasing the risk of diversion)

Actions for Community Pharmacies

If you are not participating in a palliative medicines scheme:

- ◆ Find out from your LPC or palliative care team if there is a local scheme in place, and if there is, which community pharmacies are participating
- ◆ Make sure you signpost relatives, carers and District Nurses to the participating pharmacies if you are unable to supply any palliative care medicines

If you are participating in a palliative medicines scheme:

- ◆ Make sure you are aware of which medicines you need to stock, and check your stock expiry dates frequently
- ◆ Find out from your LPC or palliative care team which other community pharmacies are participating, and in the event of stock shortages, signpost relatives, carers and District Nurses to other pharmacies

Have you seen the NECS Medicines Optimisation website?

<http://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/controlled-drugs/>

What to do with unused medicines when a patient dies

Unused medicines should be returned to a community pharmacy as soon as possible so that they can be destroyed safely

Pharmacies can accept CDs returned by patients from their own homes, and from care homes providing personal care (after 7 days), for safe destruction and onward disposal.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society guidance to pharmacists states that patient returned schedule 2 CDs and their subsequent destruction should be recorded (separate to the CD register). Patient returned CDs should be denatured in the presence of another member of staff, preferably a pharmacist or pharmacy technician if available. There is currently no requirement for the destruction of patient returned CDs to be destroyed by an authorised witness.

NECS Medicines Optimisation CD Team

Our services

The NECS Medicines Optimisation Controlled Drugs Team provide support and advice to GP practices and community pharmacies across the North East and Cumbria.

We provide support and advice on:

- ◆ Fraudulent or forged prescriptions
- ◆ Lost or stolen prescriptions and /or medication
- ◆ Controlled drug balance discrepancies
- ◆ Dispensing errors involving controlled drugs
- ◆ Prescribing errors involving controlled drugs

If you suspected fraud

For any suspected fraudulent activity including forged prescriptions, lost or stolen prescriptions/ medication, please contact police on 101 and NHS England to have an alert produced and circulated on: england.pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net

Destruction of Controlled Drugs

To request an authorised witness to attend your premises for the destruction of expired and obsolete stock schedule 2 controlled drugs, please contact the Medicines Optimisation Team (see below).

For any advice on the management of Controlled Drugs, please do not hesitate to contact the Medicines Optimisation Team as detailed below.

Future articles / contact us:

If you need advice, or have an idea for an article to be included in a future issue, please contact one of the Controlled Drugs Team Senior Medicines Optimisation Technicians or the CD Liaison Officer:

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