



Controlled Drugs: Learning from Incidents



North of England
Commissioning Support

Partners in improving local health

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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

The Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer for the North East and Cumbria has recently changed and is now Dr James Gossow, tel: 0191 2172983 fax: 0191 2172506 email: england.cumbrianortheast-cds@nhs.net

Prescribing and supply of controlled drugs

We have noticed an increase in reported incidents involving controlled drugs where either: prescriptions have gone missing having been collected from practices by pharmacies or patients' representatives (sometimes without the patient's consent), or medicines have gone missing at the point of delivery by community pharmacies due to theft of medicines from delivery vans or patients claiming not to have received their medicines

Advice to Community Pharmacies re the delivery of medicines

As security is paramount, the delivery of CDs should be prioritised to reduce the possibility of theft etc. There is a need for a clear audit trail. This will allow for any checks to be carried out and will be of benefit in the light of any discrepancies. Some key points are shown below:

- ◆ Controlled drugs should remain in the pharmacy stock balance until they have been delivered.
- ◆ A book, 'CD delivery book' should be kept and retained within the pharmacy, detailing the CDs received by the delivery driver. The CDs should be signed for by the driver and the time and date should be recorded (copy labels of the drugs can be stuck onto the page).
- ◆ A daily 'CD delivery sheet' should be produced. This sheet should have a copy of the bag label attached. This sheet accompanies the medication to the delivery address, and is returned to the pharmacy for retention. Be mindful of patient confidentiality issues.
- ◆ Once the CDs have been handed to the patient/representative, he/she should be asked to sign the receipt section of the delivery sheet. This signature should be timed and dated. A number of individual deliveries can be shown on one sheet with the patient signing only against those drugs received by them. Be mindful of patient confidentiality issues.
- ◆ If the delivery is unsuccessful and the CDs are returned to the pharmacy, the delivery book should be endorsed accordingly (time and date).
- ◆ If the delivery is successful, details of the supply can then be written into the CD register.
- ◆ Medication bags should never be on show in the delivery vehicle. Ideally they should be locked in the boot or out of sight. Vehicles should always be locked when unattended.
- ◆ Household key codes should not be recorded on medicines delivery sheets.



Have you seen the NECS Medicines Optimisation website?

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

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Advice for Practices re the security of controlled drug prescriptions

We have received reports of prescriptions being collected by people presenting themselves as relatives or representatives, without the knowledge or consent of the patient concerned, and community pharmacies requesting prescriptions which have already been collected.

Practices need to have a robust audit trail for the collection of controlled drugs prescriptions

- ◆ Practices need to obtain signatures from patients, their representatives, or community pharmacy staff when releasing CD prescriptions, bearing in mind patient confidentiality.
- ◆ It is important that the patient or representative signs, and not the reception staff, on the patient's behalf.
- ◆ Please contact the Medicines Optimisation Team if you need further advice. Contact details below.

NICE Guideline NG46 : The safe use and management of controlled drugs:



NICE published their latest guideline in April 2016. It can be found at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng46>

The guidance is complex as it covers all settings and summarises all legislation related to CDs. It contains links to useful documents and websites where further specific information about CDs is required. The guidance brings together legislation, policy advice, good practice advice and published evidence along with committee experience and opinion in developing the recommendations. The guideline covers 5 key areas: prescribing, obtaining and supplying CDs, administration, handling CDs, and monitoring. Key messages are shown below:

NG46 advice re prescribing CDs:

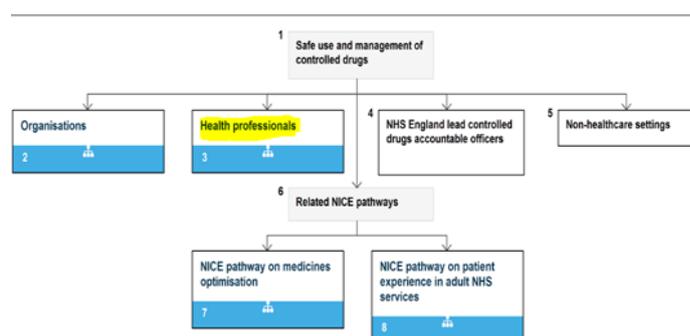
- ◆ record prescribing decisions
- ◆ provide information and advice to the person
- ◆ review repeat prescriptions and anticipatory CDs
- ◆ consider the balance of benefits, risks and harms

NG46 advice re supplying CDs:

- ◆ follow professional standards and carry out necessary safety checks
- ◆ provide information and advice to the person
- ◆ inform recipient and make a record if part supplies are made

Clicking on the pathways section of the guidance provides an useful overview of each area:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/controlled-drugs-safe-use-and-management>



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:

Newcastle Tyne & Wear	Emma Post	0191 2172983	emma.post@nhs.net
Durham Darlington & Tees	Victoria Bennett	01642 745429	vicoriabennett1@nhs.net
Cumbria	Phil Utting	01228 603050	phillip.utting@cumbria.NECSU.nhs.uk
CD Liaison Officer for all areas	Ken Dale	07919071655	ken.dale@nhs.net