



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

Burglaries to pharmacies

There have been an increasing number of burglaries to pharmacies in recent months. There is no common method of entry, however pharmacies have been entered via the roof, forcing a rear window, shutters and doors and breaking unprotected glass in the entrance door. Staff need to be alert to preparatory acts - offenders can tamper with door alarm sensors during opening hours preventing the alarm from setting at the close of business and leaving the pharmacy vulnerable overnight.

CD cabinet keys should NEVER be hidden anywhere on the premises overnight. Often all members of staff know the location of the hiding place - this information has been passed to offenders.

Greater security is provided by a key safe secured to a solid wall in a locked cupboard in a locked room. Key safe codes should be held only by the pharmacist/locum. Ideally keys should be kept in the possession of the pharmacist overnight. Pharmacists are encouraged to review existing security arrangements.

For further advice contact CD Liaison Office Ken Dale—contact details overleaf.



Percy Main CD burglary

In the early hours of 20th February 2018 a large amount of prescription drugs were stolen in a burglary from Chambers Chemist, Station Road, Percy Main. The drugs taken included:

Tapentadol	50mg – 200mg tabs
Alfentanil	0.5mg injection
Lisdexamfetamine	30mg – 70mg caps
Dexamphetamine	50mg tabs
Fentanyl	37.5mcg – 200 mcg patches & lozenges
Methylphenidate	5mg – 50mg caps and tabs
Morphine	5mg – 100mg caps, tabs, injection and sachets
Oxycodone	240-500ml oral solution
Oxycodone	5mg – 120mg caps and tabs

Large quantities of these drugs were stolen during

Insp Rob Bosson said "I'd warn those responsible or anyone who finds the drugs not to consume any of them, and would urge people not to buy or accept medication which is not specifically prescribed to them. The consequences of taking any of these medications without prescription could be fatal". Anyone with any information of the whereabouts of the stolen medication is asked to contact the police, or if anyone finds these medications to take them to their nearest station. Anyone with any information should call police on 101 quoting **ref no. 30 20/02/18**.

A **second burglary** has been reported at this pharmacy. In the early hours of March 5th a large amount of prescription drugs were stolen, including Ritalin, morphine and other opiates. Anyone with any information should call police on 101 quoting **ref no. 167 05/03/18**.

Have you seen the NECS Medicines Optimisation website?

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

Patient death due to morphine delivery error

The General Pharmaceutical Council reported a recent inquest into the death of a patient resulting from a delivery error. The patient used the local pharmacy delivery service. She received medicines intended for her but was also given Zomorph which was intended for another patient with a very similar name and who lived a few doors away. This appears to have been a mistake by the delivery driver, who also failed to obtain a signature to acknowledge delivery in accordance with the standard operating procedure. The coroner raised concerns about the lack of training of the delivery driver, the need for a red flag policy or protocol in relation to circumstances where two patients of a similar name living on the same street might give rise to a risk of drug error, and the lack of specific law or guidance with regard to where and when the custody of controlled drugs is completed.

Pharmacies should have appropriate SOPs in place to deal with deliveries of CDs. CD liaison Officer Ken Dale (contact details below) is available to give advice.

Alcohol-free phenobarbital liquid for children

The licensed phenobarbital liquid contains alcohol and shouldn't be prescribed for children - an unlicensed special phenobarbital alcohol free 50mg/1ml is available and should be prescribed instead.

Post dated prescriptions

There has been an increase in post-dated prescriptions being dispensed prior to the due date. Pharmacies should consider highlighting post-dated prescription on receipt. Often, patients are unaware that their prescriptions are post-dated.

Denaturing reminder

As well as schedule 2 and 3 controlled drugs, schedule 4 part 1 controlled drugs also need to be denatured. Examples include: diazepam, lorazepam, zaleplon, zolpidem, and zopiclone.



Lost or Stolen Prescriptions - producing an alert

Producing and circulating an alert

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

Lost prescription - contact NHS England not the police

For any lost prescriptions / medication, please contact NHS England to have an alert produced and circulated on: england.pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net **Lost prescriptions are NO LONGER reported to the police**

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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Please don't forget to share this newsletter with your colleagues!