



Controlled Drugs Newsletter

Month /Year: July 2023

Issue No. 24

This newsletter contains local and national CD information to support safe use and handling of controlled drugs

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) advice on NHS England proposal for electronic prescribing of schedule 2 & 3 controlled drugs

The ACMD has been consulted by NHS England on a proposed change to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 to permit electronic prescribing of Schedule 2 and 3 controlled drugs within secondary care and the health and justice system.

The proposal seeks to remove the requirement for a paper copy of the prescription, signed in ink by the prescriber, for the dispensing of a controlled drug from the dispensing pharmacy in all circumstances.

The ACMD has reviewed and is supportive of the proposal. The ACMD has been assured that hospitals and health and justice settings will also add additional layers of security to ensure the appropriate controls over the use of advanced electronic signatures.

For more details on the response, please see the following link:
[ACMD advice on NHS England electronic prescribing proposal - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/acmd-advice-on-nhs-england-electronic-prescribing-proposal)
(www.gov.uk)

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) decision aid to guide healthcare professional/patient discussions on sleeping pill prescriptions

NICE have published a [patient decision aid](#) and a [1-page summary](#) on withdrawal symptoms and dependence on sleeping medications. It aims to guide discussions between clinicians and patients who have been prescribed benzodiazepines or z-drugs (zolpidem or zopiclone) and help people understand the benefits and risks of staying on their current dose, reducing their dose, or stopping taking the drugs altogether.

[Decision aid to guide healthcare professional-patient discussions on sleeping pill prescriptions published | News | News | NICE](#)

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Useful Websites

CD Reporting

www.cdreporting.co.uk

Home Office

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office>

Department of Health

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health>

General Pharmaceutical Council

www.pharmacyregulation.org

Care Quality Commission

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/>

NHS Prescription Services CD section

<https://www.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/prescribing-and-dispensing/safer-management>

Community Pharmacy England

[Dispensing & Supply - Community Pharmacy England \(cpe.org.uk\)](http://Dispensing & Supply - Community Pharmacy England (cpe.org.uk))

How to request an Authorised Witness (AW) CD destruction visit (community pharmacies & dispensing GPs)

Community pharmacies with less than five branches, i.e. owned by a company which operates with less than 5 registered pharmacies under the same business name (body corporate) according to the GPhC pharmacy list, as well as dispensing practices, should submit a **destruction request** form via:

www.cdreporting.co.uk

Following this, you will be contacted in due course and a visit from an AW will be arranged.

- Pharmacies with five or more branches usually have their own AW authorised by an NHS England CDAO
- Your SOP should state how to request an AW
- A T28 exemption certificate must be obtained in order for destruction to take place in a community pharmacy or GP Practice [T28 waste exemption: sort and denature controlled drugs for disposal - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Schedule 3 & schedule 4 part 1 and patient returned CDs can be destroyed in-house by appropriately trained individuals; guidance states good practice involves two staff members - one to denature and one to witness.
- Please be aware that some DOOP kits instruct to crush tablets, we would not recommend this due to the risk of contamination/inhalation however prior to an AW visit, ensure that the relevant items necessary for CD destruction e.g. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), pestle & mortar, are available. The Medicines, Ethics and Practice (MEP) Edition 45 states 'For all forms of denaturing, and particularly if grinding or crushing tablets or breaking containers is involved individuals should work in a well-ventilated area and wear suitable protective gloves, a face mask and goggles as appropriate'

Shared learning case study - ensuring safe prescribing of controlled drugs

Situation

An advanced care practitioner (paramedic) was prescribing controlled drugs that fell outside of their prescribing remit.

A review of ePACT2 data, carried out by the NHS England, East of England, Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer (CDAO) team, revealed that a paramedic, associated to a GP practice, was unwittingly prescribing controlled drugs (CDs) over a period of time.

Some of the prescriptions were for CDs that had already been initiated by a GP, and subsequently placed on a repeat, and later issued by the paramedic. Other CDs, specifically schedule 4 and 5, were initiated by the paramedic.

The lead GP was made aware of the situation and agreed to address the underlying issues.

Key Issues

- The paramedic had limited understanding of the legislation around the prescribing of controlled drugs within their field of practice. They believed that they were authorised to prescribe all drugs that were on a repeat issue cycle, including controlled drugs
- There was confusion and lack of recognition that certain drugs such as zopiclone and co-codamol are in fact controlled drugs
- The lead GPs failed to closely monitor the paramedic's prescribing activity as part of generic CD auditing practices

What key actions/learnings can be taken following this incident?

- The paramedic produced a reflective account in which they highlighted the need to refresh their knowledge on controlled drugs legislation, in particular acknowledging that they are not authorised to prescribe controlled drugs. The practice confirmed that the paramedic has undertaken further training in this area
- The GP leads felt it was beneficial for the wider practice team to also engage in further learning around controlled drugs and so arranged a training session for all teams across the practice and the learnings were shared with local alliance pharmacists
- Following the incident, an audit of controlled drug prescriptions issued by the paramedic was carried out and reviewed by the prescribing lead who was able to confirm that there had been no patient harm as a result of these prescriptions
- Going forward, the practice will undertake regular audits and review of controlled drug prescribing by non-medical prescribers to ensure there is no inappropriate prescribing of controlled drugs
- All non-medical prescribers have been advised to carry out controlled drug audits for their prescribing as part of their continual professional development

[Link: Who can prescribe what? - Community Pharmacy England \(cpe.org.uk\)](http://cpe.org.uk)



Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) – Controlled Drugs records in pharmacy

On 30 June 2023, SPS published recommendations for the retention of records relating to Controlled Drugs (CDs) in all hospital pharmacy, community pharmacy and secure environment settings.

This includes such records as:

- Prescriptions – NHS & private
- Registers
- Transportation
- Requisitions
- Invoices
- Destruction of patient's own



For further information, please see the following link:

[Controlled Drugs records in pharmacy – SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#)

Useful links

Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS)

- [Clozapine use in adults with swallowing difficulties – SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#)
- [Using strong opioid analgesics during breastfeeding – SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#)

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)

- [European Drug Report 2023: Trends and Developments | www.emcdda.europa.eu](#)

How to contact the East of England Controlled Drugs Team



East of England CD team primary contact is england.ea-cdao@nhs.net



This inbox is continuously monitored. If you need to speak to someone urgently, please email us requesting a call back with your phone number included.

To report a CD incident or concern, or request an Authorised Witness please go to:

www.cdreporting.co.uk