

## Advice for Community Pharmacies on dealing with fraudulent prescriptions

There have been a number of reported fraudulent prescriptions presented at pharmacies in the Central Midlands over the last year. These prescription forms had been stolen from Acute Hospitals in our area. Community pharmacists are asked to treat any handwritten or amended prescriptions with extreme caution and follow up with the prescriber if you have any concerns.

You may have concerns, but are not able to speak to the prescriber straight away – fraudulent prescriptions are often presented out of hours. If you feel that in your professional opinion a supply could be justified, please consider providing the patient with the minimal amount of medicines to see them through. This would give you time to validate the legitimacy of the prescription, before making any further supply.

It is very helpful if you get a chance to take a copy of the suspicious prescription, before discussing further with the person presenting it. Another suggestion is to write on top of the FP10 '*presented at xxxxx pharmacy on x/x/xx*', to warn other pharmacies, if it gets snatched back. However your personal safety is paramount, so don't take any risks in trying to copy or retain fraudulent prescriptions – just report any information that you have.

If you believe that a prescription is fraudulent, please **contact the police on 101 or 999 as appropriate, and the NHS England Central Midlands Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer** (Bhavisha Pattani) at [england.centralmidlands-cd@nhs.net](mailto:england.centralmidlands-cd@nhs.net) Tel: 0113 824 9614/8678

Any pharmacy or dispensing practice detecting and retaining a fraudulent prescription and informing the correct authorities may be eligible for a **reward payment of up to £70.00**. For further information regarding the reward scheme please contact NHS Counter Fraud Service on 0800 068 6161. A reward is payable where fraudulent activity can be proven and the conditions for the scheme are met as set out in the Drug Tariff Part XIVA - Reward Scheme - Fraudulent Prescription forms.

### How to spot a fraudulent prescription

- Spelling mistakes, awkward phrasing, (such as '*nightly*') and odd names
- GP signature - unusual, suspiciously legible?
- General manner of the person presenting the prescription
- Often fraudulent prescriptions are presented out of surgery hours – late, or at weekends
- Odd quantities or drug combinations e.g. nitrazepam and diazepam
- Think about who would be hand writing this script, and why e.g. a month's supply of tramadol, pregabalin, diazepam, nitrazepam – unlikely from a home visit?
- Handwritten prescriptions would not normally be written on an FP10SS form (designed for printing) – if this form has been used with a stamp, or handwritten surgery address, it is likely to be fraudulent

We have also seen some examples of over-typed fraudulent FP10 prescriptions – these are usually strangely aligned on the form, with spelling and phrasing mistakes as above. However, there may well be better forgeries that do not get detected. If you are presented with a suspicious prescription with large quantities and/or combinations of medicines liable to misuse and diversion, please do check with the prescriber.