



Controlled Drugs Newsletter

Month /Year: Nov/2023

Issue No. 25

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

Care Quality Commission (CQC) The safer management of controlled drugs: Annual update 2022

On 13 July 2023, the CQC published their annual update on the safer management of controlled drugs.

Topics covered include:

- Oversight of CQC activity
- Key issues
- National trends in the prescribing of CDs
- Recommendations

[National trends in the prescribing of controlled drugs - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](https://www.cqc.org.uk)

Notification – fraudulent private prescriptions for zopiclone

Please be aware that there has been an incident reported involving an aesthetics clinic seemingly prescribing frequent zopiclone prescriptions for two patients. After further investigation including discussions with the clinic, these scripts were found to be fraudulent.

This is a reminder to always question the appropriateness of prescriptions received and check with the prescriber (using contact details corroborated or sourced online) for clarification.

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CD team

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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))

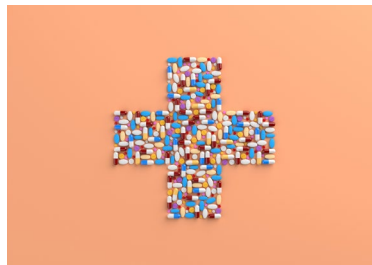
Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) emergency supply - reminders

- Supplies of no more than 5 days medication (schedule 4 or 5 CDs only) can be provided including but not limited to:
 - Some benzodiazepines e.g. diazepam
 - Codeine and dihydrocodeine e.g. co-codamol
 - Oramorph 10mg/5mL oral solution
 - Anabolic steroids
 - Z-drugs e.g. zopiclone
- A CPCS referral does not mean that a pharmacist must make the supply, it should still be clinically screened and assessed
- Be aware that some patients try to use the scheme to obtain additional dependence forming medicines, and be vigilant in assessment of those attempting to obtain repeat CPCS supplies
- Phenobarbital can **only** be supplied via CPCS for treatment of epilepsy and must still only be for up to 5 days treatment
- Testogel is a schedule 4 CD but its smallest pack size is over 5 days supply, therefore a prescription **must** be supplied

Please see relevant links below:

[The Human Medicines Regulations 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

[Community Pharmacist Consultation Service \(CPCS\) - Community Pharmacy England \(cpe.org.uk\)](http://Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) - Community Pharmacy England (cpe.org.uk))



Shared learning case study - Fraudulent attempt to obtain Controlled Drugs

Situation

A person was presenting to various community pharmacies trying to obtain tramadol (and cyclizine) fraudulently. Further investigation by the local ICB team found that blank prescriptions had been stolen from an out of hours (OOH) centre.

The prescriptions were handwritten using the prescribing information of a doctor (in 2 of the cases) with another using the identity of a registered nurse, so this was also a case of stolen identities. Concerns were highlighted by community pharmacists who questioned the legitimacy of the prescriptions as there were discrepancies between the dosage and quantity prescribed. None of the prescriptions were dispensed, and a Controlled Drugs Alert was circulated.

The person in question was subsequently arrested in connection with these incidents.

Key issues

- Prescription data and serial numbers helped to identify that the prescription forms had been supplied to an out of hours centre
- This was raised as an internal incident and reviewed by the OOH clinical governance team. It was found that there was a lack of accurate record keeping by the OOH centre, as the onward distribution of the prescription forms to various bases were not recorded correctly following initial delivery to the headquarters
- Therefore the prescription forms were unable to be tracked and it was difficult to ascertain how the prescriptions were stolen

What key learnings can be taken from this incident?

- The OOH centre have since implemented a more stringent process for managing and controlling their prescription forms. The prescriptions are now recorded on an accompanying log sheet listing all prescription numbers. Clinicians must record each prescription that is issued and at the end of their session, sign the remaining prescriptions back in
- FP10 security has been added on ICB pharmacy assurance visits for OOH centres
- Community pharmacist(s) correctly identified that the prescription(s) were fraudulent and reported this to the police and CDAO team. Continue to make people aware of these offences and encourage reporting to the police and CDAO to investigate further
- Community pharmacies, GP practices, OOH services and CDAOs must take note of Controlled Drugs alert(s) and act on these when appropriate

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) inspector East region community pharmacy reminders

At the previous East CD LINs, the GPhC shared their findings following visits to community pharmacies post COVID. Please see below for key reminders in relation to CD management and use:

- Send private prescriptions for schedule 2 and 3 CDs to the NHS Business Services Authority for monitoring
- Be aware that prescriptions for lower schedule CDs are only valid for 28 days
- Ensure patient returned CDs are appropriately recorded when received to decrease the chance of diversion
- Ensure that expired and returned schedule 3 and 4 CDs are properly managed i.e. they are denatured as appropriate and not put in with non-CD waste medicines
- Ensure that when CDs are denatured that the DOOP kit instructions are expressly followed e.g. not overfilling the kit
- Make certain that incidents involving CDs are reported to the CDAO via www.cdreporting.co.uk in a timely manner and this process is incorporated into local SOPs

Useful Links

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD)

- [ACMD review of the evidence on the use and harms of diphenidine - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Home Office Guidance

- [Nitrous oxide ban - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS)

- [Managing Controlled Drugs \(CD\) waste – SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#)

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