



# Controlled Drugs Newsletter

## Safe and secure handling of Controlled Drugs - Signposting to helpful information and guidance

### Safer Delivery of Dispensed Medication Balance

Guidance issued by the Community Pharmacy Patient Safety Group outlining a number of actions to help prevent errors. Available at:  
<https://pharmacysafety.files.wordpress.com/2017/05/safer-delivery-of-dispensed-medication-final-april-2017.pdf>



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### CD Reporting [www.cdreporting.co.uk](http://www.cdreporting.co.uk)

All organisations who prescribe, dispense, supply, hold or administer CDs must report CD related incidents to the NHS England East of England CDAO. This includes

- Prescribing error
- Dispensing error
- Balance discrepancy
- Lost medication
- Lost prescription
- Fraudulent attempts to obtain CDs

This is also the site to:

- Report CD Incidents and Concerns
- Complete CD Quarterly Occurrence Reports
- Complete Annual CD Declarations
- Request Authorised Witnesses CD Destructions

The **CQC website** has an amazing array of helpful information for all healthcare sectors. There is guidance for different providers, NHS, independent, OOH to name a few. <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/nhs-trusts/guidance-providers>

The tips and myth busters section for GPs provides pragmatic guidance on almost every topic from chaperones to managing high risk medicines, and of course a section on controlled drugs. Useful reading for all professions.  
<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/nigels-surgery-tips-mythbusters-gp-practices#well-led>

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**Useful Websites****CD Reporting**

[www.cdreporting.co.uk](http://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](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org)

**Care Quality Commission**

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

**National Prescribing Centre (Legacy site)**

[www.npc.nhs.uk](http://www.npc.nhs.uk)

**NHS Prescription Services CD section**

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

**Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee**

<http://psnc.org.uk/dispensing-supply/>

**Information and learning resources****Open Prescribing website - Open source data on prescribing**

The Open Prescribing website has a large number of ready done dashboards to show how one practice or area compares to others. For instance, the cost of immediate release fentanyl can be seen as higher than the national average in Mid and South Essex, as can prescribing of pregabalin, Norfolk and Waveney are also amongst the highest in the country

**Pharmacy regulator sets safety rules for online drugs purchases**

New guidance from the GPhC sets out requirements for online pharmacies in respect of certain drugs to have systems in place to verify the identification of patients, to have assurance that their usual GP has been contacted and to ensure the prescribed meds are clinically appropriate.

Details available at: <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/news/new-safeguards-people-seeking-medicines-online>

**Top Tips for Dependence Forming Medication**

The RCGP has published a top tips document for primary care in response to growing concerns about dependence to prescribed medicines such as opioids, gabapentin/pregabalin, benzodiazepines/z-drugs. Available at:

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/resources/a-to-z-clinical->

**Be aware — electronic prescriptions potential safety issue**

If downloading prescriptions in advance of their due date please remember that cancellation notifications may not be actioned.

There has been an incident of a weekly post dated prescription where the dose was reduced. The pharmacy system downloaded both prescriptions, fortunately because one of them mentioned a reducing dose, the pharmacist spotted it and checked so the patient did not receive both prescriptions.

When dispensing please look on your system to see when the last supply was made—if it was within a few days that should be a cause for concern.

**RPS Guidance on the safe and secure handling of medicines**

The guidance details the four governance principles that underpin a framework for safe and secure handling of medicines and may be useful to all organisations. Appendix B is specifically about controlled drugs.

Available at <https://www.rpharms.com/recognition/setting-professional-standards/safe-and-secure-handling-of-medicines/professional-guidance-on-the-safe-and-secure-handling-of-medicines>



## Private prescribing of Schedule 2 & 3 controlled drugs

### Private CD prescriptions - Form FP10PCD and Private PIN

The recent reschedule of gabapentin and pregabalin presents an ideal opportunity to ensure you know all the requirements for prescribing and dispensing controlled drugs (schedule 2 & 3) privately:

- ◆ Prescribers must have a private PIN, this is different to their NHS prescriber number. The PIN is obtained by application to the appropriate lead CDAO, in this area please contact [england.ea-cdao@nhs.net](mailto:england.ea-cdao@nhs.net)
- ◆ Once a prescriber has a PIN they can order the pink private prescription forms FP10PCD.
- ◆ The prescriber must ensure their 6 digit PIN is written or printed on the prescription form otherwise the pharmacist will refuse to dispense it.
- ⇒ Pharmacies must make appropriate checks\* on the validity of the prescription and the prescriber.
- ⇒ Dispensed prescriptions should be submitted to the NHSBSA at the end of each month. This enables tracking of private CD prescribing in a similar way to NHS prescribing.
- ⇒ To submit FP10PCD community pharmacies need a private CD submission number, to obtain a number please apply to [england.pharmacyeast@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacyeast@nhs.net)
- ⇒ The special submission form can be downloaded from the NHSBSA website.

#### \*Checks:

- Is the prescription written on the right form (Pink FP10PCD)
- Does it have a private prescriber number (6 digits)
- If you do not recognise the prescriber check the GMC website. Some prescribers may have conditions imposed on their practice which restrict prescribing of certain drugs.
- Are all the legal requirements met for a CD prescription. Dose, words and figures, expiry date, pharmaceutical form etc.



**Note: A private PIN is also required to requisition CDs privately.**

Remember for all CD prescriptions the 30 day rule:

The amount prescribed should not exceed 30 days supply except in exceptional circumstances.

If it does then the prescriber should be contacted and asked to explain their reason for prescribing outside of the guidance. The reason should be noted on the patients record by the prescriber and the dispenser.

'Exceptional circumstances' means it is unacceptable to always prescribe more than 30 days supply to a particular patient and it should be queried each time.





## CD Balance Checks - Responses to FAQ and recent incidents

- Regular balance checks of schedule 2 CDs must be carried out.
- The frequency of checks should be determined by assessing risk and will probably be specified for your organisation within a standard operating procedure (SOP). Guidance (MEP) suggests a check at least once a week is appropriate but may be less frequent dependent on volume of dispensing of the item, past irregularities or incidents or if there are several different pharmacists in charge over short periods. A minimum of once a month for a complete CD check is expected.
- Balance checks should ideally be carried out by two people and recorded as 'balance check' on a separate line in the CD register, dated and signed.

### Methadone running balance and balance checking

- **Bottles supplied by the manufacturer do not always contain the quantity you expect.** There is frequently an overage of 3 to 5% so for methadone supplies it is important to measure the amount dispensed not just supply an original pack.
- Liquid CDs should be kept sealed until needed. For the purpose of balance checking the assumption should be made that the contents are exactly that stated on the label e.g. 500ml
- Liquids should be routinely checked during the dispensing process. Measure the quantity at the end of each bottle before topping up from the next bottle. This enables identification of underage or overage which should be recorded on a separate line in the CD register identified as 'overage' or 'underage' and the running balance should be corrected, the entry should be signed by the pharmacist and if appropriate the second person who confirmed the quantity.
- Calculate the % difference: If the discrepancy is more than expected (your organisation should have guidelines in a SOP) this must be investigated and reported to the CDAO.
- If balance checks have not been done at the end of each bottle then calculate the difference taking into account the total volume dispensed since the last verified balance check.

### Contact us

The address for the CD generic inbox is [england.ea-cdao@nhs.net](mailto:england.ea-cdao@nhs.net).

The CD Team generic inbox is continuously monitored. If you need to speak to someone and can't contact us by phone please email us with your phone number and we will call you as soon as we can. Any requests for an urgent alert via the CAS, for instance stolen prescriptions, please contact the generic inbox and request a CAS alert form.

**Telephone number: 01138250770**

Report a CD incident, request an Authorised Witness or make an annual declaration at [www.cdreporting.co.uk](http://www.cdreporting.co.uk)

