

## NHS England & NHS Improvement—Midlands (North) Controlled Drugs Newsletter

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### CD LIN members

A note for your diaries the next CD LIN meetings are:

[Shropshire & Staffordshire](#)  
22 January 2020.

[Derbyshire &  
Nottinghamshire](#)  
05 February 2020.

This newsletter contains local and national CD information to support safe use and handling of controlled drugs. You can use the dedicated e-mail to contact us: Shropshire & Staffordshire e-mail: [england.shropshire-staffs-cd@nhs.net](mailto:england.shropshire-staffs-cd@nhs.net) Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire e-mail: [england.nottsderbycontroldrugs@nhs.net](mailto:england.nottsderbycontroldrugs@nhs.net)

Report ALL CD incidents, concerns and occurrence reports via the CD on-line reporting tool: [www.cdreporting.co.uk](http://www.cdreporting.co.uk)

### NICE Cannabis-based Medicinal Products Guideline Published

The NICE guideline for cannabis-based medicinal products has been published. You can read and download a copy of the NICE guideline at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng144>

The guideline is intended for healthcare professionals and patients, their families and carers.

Two cannabis-based medicines, used to treat epilepsy and multiple sclerosis, have been approved for use by the NHS. The initial prescription of cannabis-based medicinal products must be made by a specialist medical practitioner. Subsequent prescriptions may be issued by another prescriber as part of a shared care agreement under the direction of the initiating specialist prescriber, following agreed protocols.

### Government Response on Medicinal Cannabis

The Government have recently published their response to the Health and Social Care Committee Report on medicinal cannabis. You can read the document at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/829762/government-response-to-the-health-and-social-care-committee-report-on-drugs-policy-medicinal-cannabis.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/829762/government-response-to-the-health-and-social-care-committee-report-on-drugs-policy-medicinal-cannabis.pdf)

The document includes the key points on clinical research, access to medicinal quality products, and the need for more patient education etc.

The document also includes links to the Health Education England (HEE) e-learning modules which are available to all healthcare professionals in the UK. Healthcare professionals can register on the HEE website at: <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/cannabis-based-products-for-medicinal-use/>



### CQC Nigel's Surgery 28: Management of Controlled Drugs Update

The CQC have updated their guidance on the [safe management of controlled drugs \(CDs.\)](#)

This guidance is aimed at GP practices and summarises the current requirements and provides some practical guidance for practices.



### Schedule 2 Controlled Drugs Unresolved Discrepancy Reports

NHS England and NHS Improvement Midlands (North) CD team have received a number of incident reports that reference Schedule 2 controlled drugs being thrown away because the split packaging is believed to be empty. All sites should have systems in place to thoroughly check split packs and empty packaging before disposing of it to prevent controlled drug items being thrown in the bin and an unresolved discrepancy occurring.

## Patient Safety Message - Alfentanil in Palliative Care

There have been two recent incidents of patient harm in the East of the Country following conversion from Alfentanil to another opioid.

Both patients were on Alfentanil due to Renal impairment (RI) - (RI alters the clearance of the parent compound and affects accumulation of its metabolites. Elimination of opioids may be prolonged. Alfentanil is one of the opioids which exhibits the safest pharmacological/pharmacokinetic profile in RI. Whilst there is limited evidence for the use in RI, it can be used cautiously but the risk of an unfamiliar opioid should be considered. Dose titration of alfentanil should be supervised by a specialist familiar with its use as it is a highly potent opioid (> 30x stronger than oral morphine) monitoring for signs of toxicity is required.)

When undertaking any opioid conversion get another prescriber to check for you, wherever possible.

**Key Message - do not change Alfentanil s/c to another opioid (oral or parenteral) without specialist advice.**

Approximate 24-hour dose equivalent (SC = subcutaneous)					
Oral Morphine	SC Morphine	SC Diamorphine	Oral Oxycodone	SC Oxycodone	SC Alfentanil
30mg	15mg	10mg	15mg	7.5mg	1mg

References: <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/drug/alfentanil.html>  
<https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/which-opioids-can-be-used-in-renal-impairment/>  
<https://renal.org/information-resources/the-uk-eckd-guide/ckd-stages/>  
[https://www.sps.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/SW\\_QA\\_402-4\\_Nov17\\_Final.doc](https://www.sps.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/SW_QA_402-4_Nov17_Final.doc)

With thanks to the East of England CD team for sharing this patient safety message with us.

## Opioid Training Module for Pharmacy Professionals

An opioid learning module is available on the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) gateway page, for pain, under core/foundation learning, through the MHRA.

Registered pharmacy professionals can access this through the CPPE gateway at <https://www.cppe.ac.uk/gateway/pain>



The module is also available on the MHRA website for all at <http://www.mhra.gov.uk/opioids-learning-module/con143740>



## Disposing of Controlled Drugs in Care Homes

NHS England & NHS Improvement North Midlands CD team have received a few enquiries about how care homes should dispose of controlled drugs (CDs). It is important to note that the disposal of medicines waste is subject to legislation and regulated by the Environment Agency.

**Care homes with nursing** - Must only return medicines to a licensed waste disposal company. Patients' own individually-labelled controlled drugs in schedules 2, 3 and 4 must be denatured in an appropriate CD denaturing kit before handing to the waste disposal company. Good practice involves two staff members (at least one being a registered professional) - one to denature and the other to act as a witness. A nursing home will need to apply for a T28 waste exemption from the Environment Agency, this is free of charge and available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/waste-exemption-t28-sort-and-denature-controlled-drugs-for-disposal>

**Care homes without nursing** - All medicines including CDs should be returned to a community pharmacy or dispensing doctor. Unwanted or out-of-date CDs should be stored in the CD cabinet, segregated from current stock and returned promptly. Best practice involves two staff members recording CD returns entries in the care home CD register. This helps to verify that the register is accurate.

You can find further guidance for disposal of medicines in care homes on the CQC website at: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/disposing-medicines-care-homes-care-homes-nursing>

## Key Messages

- ◆ Publication of the NICE Cannabis-based medicinal products guideline
- ◆ Patient Safety Message - Alfentanil in Palliative Care
- ◆ CQC Management of controlled drugs update
- ◆ Unresolved Discrepancy Reports
- ◆ Report ALL CD incidents, concerns and occurrence reports via the CD on-line reporting site: [www.cdreporting.co.uk](http://www.cdreporting.co.uk)

