



# Controlled Drugs: Learning from Incidents

North of England  
Commissioning Support

Partners in improving local health

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NECS supports the NHS England Area Team Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer in ensuring the safe management and use of controlled drugs within the North East & Cumbria region. Based on the commonly reported incidents and the lessons learned, we aim to share good practice across the region

## LEARNING FROM INCIDENTS

**Hand out errors:** There has been an increase in incidents relating to the hand-out of the wrong patient's medication. The majority of these incidents have been to regular patients known to the staff highlighting correct procedures have not been followed.

Please ensure for **ALL** patients that identity is confirmed at **ALL** times. This includes confirming:

- Name
- Address
- D.O.B

It is also good practice to ask what the client is expecting as this is an extra check and can identify if anything is newly prescribed or missing.

**Lost/misplaced/mismanaged FP10MDAs:** There has been a number of incidents of pharmacies that have confirmed receipt of prescriptions and have then lost or accidentally destroyed them. At times this has resulted in missed doses for patients/clients. Other times misuse services have changed or cancelled prescriptions and this has not been actioned at the pharmacy. Please ensure:

- You check-in the receipt of FP10MDAs and chase any that are missing.
- Have a robust filing system for current and post-dated prescriptions that all staff are aware of.
- The pharmacy system highlight any substance misuse client's prescriptions when they have missed three doses and report this **ASAP** to the service provider.
- Deal with amendments/cancellations by the prescribers promptly and robustly (you may decide to record any communication with the substance misuse services in a message book).

### ORAMORPH—SCHEDULE 5 CD

There has been a serious incident where a patients dose was written on the pharmacy label as **mgs** and was mistaken for **mils**, therefore higher doses were administered. Unfortunately when handed out by the pharmacy, the carer was not counselled on administration and this resulted in the patients death. We therefore recommend counselling patients on their Oramorph dose to ensure they know exactly how much they are taking and what to measure out, give a measuring device if required.

### FP10MDA TITRATING PRESCRIPTIONS

If a client misses any titrating dose of their Methadone or Buprenorphine **DO NOT SUPPLY** the next script. Rather please confirm with the prescriber how they wish to proceed with the client.

Have you seen the NECS Medicines Optimisation website?

<http://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/controlled-drugs/>

## WE'RE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

### Requesting visits for destruction of controlled drugs and reporting controlled drug incidents and concerns

Controlled drug incidents or concerns should be notified to the NHS England Accountable Officer for Controlled Drugs via the NECS Medicines Optimisation Team (see below).

NHS Cumbria and North East Accountable Officer – Dr James Gossow

Examples of incidents that should be reported include:

- Fraudulent / forged prescriptions
- Lost / stolen prescriptions and /or medication
- Controlled drug balance discrepancies
- Dispensing errors involving controlled drugs
- Prescribing errors involving controlled drugs
- Spillages

For any suspected fraudulent activity including forged prescriptions, stolen prescriptions/medication, please contact the police on 101 and NHS England to have an alert produced and circulated on [england.pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net)

For any lost prescriptions / medication, please contact NHS England to have an alert produced and circulated on [england.pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacyandoptometry@nhs.net)

To request an authorised witness to attend your premises for the destruction of expired and obsolete stock schedule 2 controlled drugs, please contact the Medicines Optimisation Team (see below).

Further, for any advice on the management of Controlled Drugs, please do not hesitate to contact the Medicines Optimisation Team

**Please note the CD team no longer have access to a fax and therefore can't receive any faxed information.**

### Role of the Controlled Drugs Liaison Officer (CDLO) - Ken Dale

There is a requirement for the CDLO to provide highly specialist advice and support to the NHS England & NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) North East and Yorkshire Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer (CDAO). The role clearly requires an investigative background and experience of dealing with incidents involving pharmaceutical controlled drugs (CD's) together with a detailed knowledge of the relevant legislation.

**Investigations** - It is the responsibility of the CDLO to initiate and lead investigations into incidents and concerns around CD's.

**CD Regulations** - Numerous requests for advice around CD Regulations are received on a regular basis.

**Providing Training** - There are numerous examples of training that has been presented across a range of organisations, these include; Pharmacy Security, CD Awareness, Suspected Staff Criminality.

**Regulatory Bodies/Police** - Regularly liaises with the GPhC, GMC and NMC with regards to investigations that the CDLO has carried out. On many occasions those investigations do not meet the criteria for the police to be involved.

**CD Liaison Officer for all areas**

**Ken Dale**

**07919071655**

**[ken.dale@nhs.net](mailto:ken.dale@nhs.net)**

## Ask for ANI

**Ask for ANI** (Action Needed Immediately) is a codeword scheme developed by the Home Office to provide a discreet way for victims of domestic abuse to signal that they need emergency help from the safety of their local pharmacy.

Victims of domestic abuse will be able to use the codeword ANI in participating pharmacies (including all Boots stores and participating independent pharmacies) to let staff know that they require an emergency police response or help contacting a helpline or specialist support service.

When a victim uses the codeword or asks for help, the member of staff will offer to accompany the individual to the consultation room. They will then check whether the victim wants the police to be called. If so, the staff member will offer the use of a phone to dial 999 or make the call on the victim's behalf.

If the victim is not in an emergency situation, the staff member will support the victim to contact a national domestic abuse helpline or local support service. They may also contact the police via 101.

**Any questions or queries about the scheme can be directed to [AskforANI@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:AskforANI@homeoffice.gov.uk)**

# ASK FOR ANI DOMESTIC ABUSE CODEWORD SCHEME

To access additional training resources, posters and the form to record any use of the codeword, visit: [gov.uk/homeoffice/pharmacy-codeword-scheme](https://gov.uk/homeoffice/pharmacy-codeword-scheme)

## CLOSING PHARMACIES

If a pharmacy needs to close, e.g. due to COVID or having no pharmacist and the pharmacy provides opioid substitution therapy (OST), then the pharmacy must inform the local specialist service and their local authority commissioner of the closure, so that they can discuss how best to mitigate any impact on these patients receipt of OST and agree alternative arrangements .

## CAUTION - HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS COLLECTING PRESCRIPTIONS

If a healthcare professional (not for EOL) comes to collect a prescription for controlled drugs in person, with the aim to deliver the script to the patient and it raises any concerns with you as the responsible pharmacist, please confirm if there is a genuine reason for this with the Practice/Surgery Manager. Alternatively contact your local CD Team.

If you need advice, or would like an article to be included in a future issue, please contact one of the Controlled Drugs Team Senior Medicines Optimisation Technicians or the CD Liaison Officer:

Northumberland Tyne & Wear and North Cumbria	Emma Post	0191 2172983	<a href="mailto:emma.post@nhs.net">emma.post@nhs.net</a>
Durham Darlington & Tees	Victoria Bennett	01642 745429	<a href="mailto:victoriabennett1@nhs.net">victoriabennett1@nhs.net</a>
CD Liaison Officer for all areas	Ken Dale	07919071655	<a href="mailto:ken.dale@nhs.net">ken.dale@nhs.net</a>