

SOP 5: Template Standard Operating Procedure for Prescribing a Controlled Drug and the Collection of the Prescription

Objectives

To ensure prescriptions issued for controlled drugs (CDs) are legal, accurate and conform to good practice and there is a process in place for their collection.

Scope

This SOP encompasses all prescriptions produced for controlled drugs within the Practice.

Responsibilities

- The authorised clinician is responsible for all clinical and legal aspects of prescribing of controlled drugs in accordance with the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Human Medicines Regulation 2012.
- CDs should be prescribed according to national and local guidance. Prescribers should be able to justify 'outlying' prescribing.
- All private prescriptions for CDs must be written on prescription form FP10PCD using a private CD prescriber identifier code obtained from the NHS England CDAO. For more information email england.lancscontrolledrugs@nhs.net.
- Authorised practice staff may be responsible for generating prescriptions.
- The Practice manager should keep a full list of the prescribers and their scope of prescribing authority. A record of an annual review should be kept of the prescribing authority of clinicians from their professional body's website.
- Practice staff are responsible for ensuring there is an audit trail for the collection of controlled drug prescriptions.

Process and Records

1. The need for a CD prescription is identified and use of non-pharmacological treatment and non-CDs has been considered.

2. Only those prescribers legally able to prescribe controlled drugs may prescribe within their own competence.
3. All prescribers should be familiar with the security processes of controlled drug prescriptions. Further guidance can be found in [Management of Prescriptions Forms](#); A guide for prescribers and health organisations.
4. Prescriptions for Schedule 2, 3 and 4 CDs are only valid for **28 days**. The 28 day period of validity runs from the date the prescription was signed unless the prescriber has specified a start date on the prescription. For instalment dispensing prescriptions, the first supply must be made within 28 days of the appropriate date and the remainder of the instalments must be dispensed only in accordance with the directions on the prescription.
5. There is a **good practice requirement** that the quantity of Schedules 2, 3 and 4 CDs be **limited to a quantity for up to 30 days treatment**. In cases where the prescriber believes that a prescription should be issued for a longer period they may do so, but will need to be able to justify that there is a clinical need and that it would not cause an unacceptable risk to patient safety. This information should be clearly documented in the patient's notes.
6. The generated prescription (either FP10 or private prescription FP10PCD) must be completed on the appropriate form and in accordance with the legal requirements for the relevant schedule. Information that must be included on both NHS and private prescriptions forms for controlled drugs in **Schedules 2 and 3** is:
 - a. The patient's full name, address, age, date of birth and (where possible) their NHS number. Legally an age is required if below 12 years but it is good practice to include the date of birth for all prescriptions.
 - b. The name, form and strength of the drug.
 - c. The dose and frequency to be taken (**'as directed' etc. is NOT legal**).
 - d. The total quantity of the preparation in both words and figures.
 - e. The prescriber's name and Practice address must be stated on the prescription, together with their registration number and profession.
 - f. The prescription should be signed and dated by the prescriber in indelible ink and include the prescriber's UK address (and contact details). An Advanced Electronic Signature is acceptable for EPS2 prescriptions where S2 and S3 CDs are able to be prescribed electronically. The prescriber's name should be legible.
 - g. A prescriber code is necessary for NHSBSA and for private prescriptions.
 - h. Independent and Supplementary prescribers must also include their designation, professional registration number and prescriber code.

7. A CD may be authorised for issue on repeat but this must only be done by an authorised prescriber. The Practice repeat prescribing SOP should also be followed, in addition to this SOP.
8. Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 CDs cannot be prescribed on the repeat dispensing service (RDS). The first supply of Schedule 4 CDs on RDS must be within 28 days of issue and for S5 CDs within 6 months of issue; after then the prescription is valid for 12 months from the date of issue.
9. If a prescriber makes a home visit and a controlled drug is prescribed, the patient's medication record should be updated at the earliest opportunity (ideally 48 hours).
10. The identity and address of a patient collecting a prescription must be checked. The collection of a controlled drug prescription must also be recorded in a bound book specifically for this use and include the patient's name, controlled drug, name of person collecting the drug, their signature and date of collection: All CD prescriptions should be signed for when collected from the Practice, whether this is a healthcare professional, community pharmacy staff, the patient or their representative.
11. If a prescription for a CD is lost every attempt should be made to locate it and the prescriber should be notified along with the NHS England CD Accountable Officer. Refer to the SOP for dealing with Lost/Stolen/Forged Prescriptions.
12. Patients / carers should have clear information on how to safely use, store and dispose the prescribed CD; document when the drug driving advice is given. The patient / carer should be informed that identity evidence will be required when collecting dispensed schedule 2 and 3 CDs.
13. High-dose prescribing should be with reference to appropriate specialist advice. Prolonged prescribing of high doses should involve review by an alternative prescriber within the practice.
14. For patients travelling abroad, prescribers should be aware of the advice from the Home Office at <https://www.gov.uk/travelling-controlled-drugs>

References and Useful links:

1. NICE Recommendations on Prescribing Controlled Drugs
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG46/chapter/Recommendations#prescribing-controlled-drugs>
2. PSNC Guidance on Dispensing and Supplying of Controlled Drugs.
<http://psnc.org.uk/dispensing-supply/dispensing-controlled-drugs/controlled-drug-prescription-forms-validity/>
3. NICE NG46 (2016) Controlled Drugs: Safe Use and Management.
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng46>
4. Summary of NICE NG46 in NICE Bites March 2016:No.87
[http://www.medicinesresources.nhs.uk/upload/documents/Health%20In%20Focus/NICE Bites%20May%202016%20No%2087%20CDs.pdf](http://www.medicinesresources.nhs.uk/upload/documents/Health%20In%20Focus/NICE%20Bites%20May%202016%20No%2087%20CDs.pdf)
5. BNF guidance for controlled drugs prescribing.
<https://bnf.nice.org.uk/guidance/controlled-drugs-and-drug-dependence.html>
6. NICE KTT21 (2017) Medicines Optimisation in long-term pain.
<https://www.nice.org.uk/advice/ktt21>
7. NICE CG140 (updated 2016) Palliative care for adults; strong opioids for pain relief.
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg140>
8. Electronic Prognostic Assessment and Information Guide for End of Life website for Cheshire – includes conversion chart, assessment tools, e-learning & more.
<http://www.cheshire-epaige.nhs.uk/Stages/Latest%20News.aspx>
9. Drug driving and medicine advice.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drug-driving-and-medicine-advice-for-healthcare-professionals>
10. NHS England supported information and education about opioid use particularly for non-malignant pain. Opioids Aware
<http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/faculty-of-pain-medicine/opioids-aware>
11. Drug Misuse and Dependence guidance July 2017
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drug-misuse-and-dependence-uk-guidelines-on-clinical-management>

12. NHS Choices also have lots of helpful information to support patients to work towards non-pharmacological methods to cope with all types of pain including the Pain Toolkit and mindfulness in the Livewell section:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Pain/Pages/Painhome.aspx>

13. This video is useful to share with patients when talking about chronic pain:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gy5yKbduGkc>

14. Webinars by GPs to support prescribing and de-prescribing controlled drugs from PrescQIPP

<https://www.prescqipp.info/other-comms/media-videos-and-webinars>

15. **NHS Counter Fraud Authority:** Management and control of prescription forms. A guide for prescribers and health organisations, March 2018.

https://cfa.nhs.uk/resources/downloads/guidance/Management%20and%20control%20of%20prescription%20forms_v1.0%20March%202018.pdf