

Reporting Incidents, Near Misses and Concerns Involving Controlled Drugs

A Guide for NHS Staff and Contractors

There is a requirement for the NHS Board Accountable Officer (AO) to be notified of all incidents and concerns involving controlled drugs (CDs) that arise within their organisation and in the premises of independent contractors. Receiving information on all CD incidents allows the AO to track trends and share these on an anonymous basis to prevent recurrence.

This Guide has been produced to clarify exactly what is required and applies to all incidents and concerns involving Controlled Drugs in Schedules 2, 3, 4 and 5, but does not apply to those involving illicit drugs.

The Board AO should receive information on issues related to:

1. Clinical Governance and Professional Practice

- All events or near misses involving prescribing, administration, supply or dispensing of CDs
- Any concern(s) about professional practice or behaviour of staff in relation to CDs e.g. unusual prescribing patterns
- Complaints from patients/carers/service users relating to CDs

2. Record Keeping and Stock Discrepancies

- Unexplained losses/discrepancies of any CD, regardless of schedule
- Any discrepancy in CD stock which, although resolved, raises concerns
- Events or near misses involving CD destruction
- Loss of CD Register/Order Book or other relevant controlled stationery

3. Fraud and Possible Criminal Issues

- Any suspected illegal activity relating to CDs, e.g. theft, patients attempting to obtain CDs by deception
- Lost or stolen prescription forms
- Attempts to fraudulently produce prescriptions.

These examples are not mutually exclusive, for example, record keeping issues may escalate to concerns about clinical practice or suspected theft.

All CD incident reports must include details of the actions taken, including immediate steps to prevent or reduce harm to patients, any investigations undertaken and actions taken to prevent recurrence, to provide assurance to the AO that the incident has been thoroughly investigated.

In the event of a serious incident or concern, the AO must be notified within two working days.

If reports are made through other systems or for other purposes, a copy of the existing paperwork should be supplied, e.g. Datix, SEA, appraisal, company reports.

Where there is no reporting form available, 'NHS Scotland Controlled Drugs Incident Report to Accountable Officer' may be used. This can be found at

Alternatively contact fife-uhb.cd@nhs.net for a copy of the form or contact Pharmacy Services on 01383 565 351