

Controlled Drugs Reminder: Schedule 2 Stock Must Remain in the Running Balance Until Destruction

Recent CDAO reports have highlighted the importance of maintaining accurate CD register balances this included where there is out-of-date stock and medicines supplied in error.

Schedule 2 CDs remain part of the accountable stock balance until they have been physically destroyed, and the destruction has been appropriately witnessed and recorded. Expired stock or stock returned following a dispensing error must therefore remain within the running balance until destruction has taken place.

Expired Schedule 2 Controlled Drugs

When Schedule 2 CDs pass their expiry date, they must:

- Be retained in the CD cabinet/safe until destruction.
- Be segregated from usable stock.
- Be clearly marked as date-expired stock to prevent accidental supply.
- Remain under CD governance arrangements pending destruction by an Authorised Witness.

Writing these medicines out of the register before destruction creates an inaccurate running balance and compromises the audit trail.

CDs Returned Following a Dispensing Error

Where a dispensing error involves a Schedule 2 CD:

- CD register entries and balances should be corrected to reflect what was actually supplied to the patient.
- Incorrectly dispensed medicines should be retrieved, segregated from normal stock and held securely pending destruction by an Authorised Witness.
- Incorrectly dispensed medicines should be treated as stock CD and entered into the CD register.

Why This Matters

Maintaining the stock within the running balance until destruction:

- Preserves an accurate audit trail.
- Ensures the physical stock matches the recorded balance.
- Supports safe and effective CD governance.
- Provides assurance which investigations may be required.
- Reduces the risk of unexplained discrepancies.

Until destruction occurs, expired stock and stock recovered following a dispensing error should remain recorded within the running balance and be stored securely and segregated from usable stock.

Full details can be found in Section 10 (Discrepancies, Incidents and Concerns) and Section 11 (Destruction of Controlled Drugs), [A Guide to Good Practice in the Management of Controlled Drugs in Primary Care](#), Scotland Version 4.0, May 2026.