

Reporting Incidents, Near Misses and Concerns Involving Controlled Drugs (CDs): A Guide for NHS Staff and Contractors

There is a requirement for the NHS Board Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer (CDAO) to be notified of all incidents and concerns involving CDs that arise **within their organisation** and in the **premises of independent contractors**. Receiving information on all CD incidents allows the CDAO to track trends and share these on an anonymous basis to raise awareness and minimise risk of recurrence.

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

The Board CDAO 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
- Explained losses of any CD, including where a CD is dropped, damaged or spilled
- 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 CDAO that the incident has been thoroughly investigated.

In the event of an incident or concern, the CDAO must be notified within TWO working days.

Reporting of incidents should follow the Health Board preferred format. For details refer to controlled drug section on NHS Community Pharmacy website for the Health Board [NHS Boards – Community Pharmacy \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk)

Contact details for CDAOs can be found at: [Controlled Drugs Accountable Officers register – Healthcare Improvement Scotland](https://www.scot.nhs.uk) or from your local NHS Board, hospital or HSCP pharmacy team.