

From: **Head of Inspection and Investigation**
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Dear Colleague

SAFER MANAGEMENT OF CONTROLLED DRUGS: PRIVATE CONTROLLED DRUGS PRESCRIPTIONS AND OTHER CHANGES TO THE PRESCRIBING AND DISPENSING OF CONTROLLED DRUGS

The Department of Health in London has issued the above interim guidance paper on the safer management of controlled drugs which is available at:

www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/MedicinesPharmacyAndIndustry/Prescriptions/ControlledDrugs/fs/en.

Whilst this document refers specifically to England, similar changes resulting from proposed changes to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations will be implemented across the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. A full consultation process was carried out in Northern Ireland ending in October 2005 and the subsequent implementation process as it will apply in Northern Ireland is currently being discussed.

The purpose of this letter is to raise your awareness of the fact that changes to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations will occur and to draw your attention to some of the changes which have already taken place (see table below). The legislation required to bring about these additional changes is anticipated to come into effect in summer 2006. Detailed information will follow in due course.

Change	Status	England	NI Position
Handwriting requirements for Schedule 2 and 3 CD prescriptions have been removed.	Legal	Current	Current
The validity of Schedule 2, 3 and 4 CD prescriptions will be restricted to 28 days.	Legal requirement	Summer 2006	Summer 2006
Prescriptions for Schedule 2 and 3 CDs will contain a prescriber identifier.	Legal requirement	Summer 2006	Discussions ongoing

Standardised private prescription forms will be required for all Schedule 2 and 3 CDs.	Legal requirement	Summer 2006	Discussions ongoing
Private prescriptions for Schedule 2 and 3 CDs returned to CSA at the end of each month for analysis.	Legal requirement	Summer 2006	Discussions ongoing
Prescriptions forms amended to allow those collecting Schedule 2 or 3 CDs to confirm they have done so.	Good practice	Summer 2006	Discussions ongoing
The quantity of Schedule 2, 3 and 4 CDs to be prescribed at any one time should not exceed 30 days' supply.	Good practice	Summer 2006	Discussions ongoing
Prescribers should not prescribe or administer CDs for themselves, or for close family or friends, except in exceptional circumstances.	Good practice	Immediate effect	Guidance from professional bodies
CD registers can be kept electronically as long as they comply with national guidance	Legal but not mandatory	Current	Current
A record must be made of the prescriber identifier in the CD register	Legal requirement	Summer 2006	Discussions ongoing
Pharmacists should make a record of whether or not they have asked for proof of identity of individuals collecting Schedule 2 CDs in CD register	Legal requirement	Summer 2006	Discussions ongoing
Records should be made of all patient returned Schedule 2 CDs	Good practice	Current	Current
All CD register should contain a running balance (will become mandatory)	Good practice	Current	Current
All community pharmacies, GPs and Healthcare bodies in England (both NHS and private) will be required to make a periodic declaration and self-assessment stating whether or not they hold stocks of CDs on the premises.	Legal requirement	Autumn 2006	Discussions ongoing
All healthcare providers in England who hold stocks of CDs on premises will be expected to have, and comply with, an approved standard operating procedure.	Legal requirement	Autumn 2006	Discussions ongoing

Pharmacists will be able to supply CDs against some prescriptions that have a technical error but where the prescriber's intention is clear.	Legal (enabling)	Summer 2006	Summer 2006
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For further details on the proposed new arrangements for the management of controlled drugs see the article entitled "Changes to the Management of Controlled Drugs Affecting Pharmacists in England" in the Pharmaceutical Journal dated 25th March 2006 (www.pjonline.com). Similar information is available in the Chemist and Druggist magazine dated 13th March 2006 (www.dotpharmacy.com/180306.html).

Pharmacists should note that from 1st April 2006 all English private prescriptions for controlled drugs must be written on the new standardised private prescription forms (FP10(PCD)) – see link to www.dh.gov.uk.

If you have any further queries please contact either Michelle McCorry on 028 9052 3279 or Joe Gault on 028 9052 0768.

Yours sincerely

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