September 2024

Lost or Stolen Prescriptions

NHS England Midlands

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Prescription forms are classed as controlled stationery and the theft of prescription forms and their consequent misuse is an area of concern for a number of reasons:

- A prescription form is an NHS asset that has a financial cost attached
- Prescription forms should be treated as 'blank cheques' which, in the wrong hands, can lead to a misuse of NHS resources
- Stolen forms, or indeed whole pads, can be used to illegally obtain controlled drugs (CDs), as well as other medicines either for illegitimate or personal use
- The effective management of prescription forms, for example how they are stored and accessed by authorised prescribing and non-prescribing staff is very important and requires that appropriate security policies, procedures and systems are in place.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU LOSE A PRESCRIPTION PAD, OR A PRESCRIPTION PAD IS STOLEN…….

REPORT INTERNALLY TO DESIGNATED PERSON

At the first opportunity the prescriber or staff member should notify the designated person with overall responsibility for prescription forms at the practice. The matter should also be recorded as a security incident on the organisation's incident reporting system.

REPORT TO NHS ENGLAND

The Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer (CDAO) at NHS England must be notified. **Midlands CD Team** - england.midlandscd@nhs.net
Provide details of the incident, the prescription numbers unaccounted for, the quantity and the prescriber's details. This is so that an alert can be circulated in case the prescriptions are presented to community pharmacies.

REPORT TO COUNTER FRAUD

If you have any suspicions or concerns about prescription forms being fraudulently used, you should report this to the NHS Counter Fraud Agency. Reports can be submitted to the NHSCFA on 0800 028 4060 or on-line at https://cfa.nhs.uk/report-fraud/starting-an-online-report
Additional information on management and control of prescriptions issued by the CFA is available via the following link:
https://cfa.nhs.uk/resources/downloads/guidance/Management_and_control_of_prescription_forms_v1.0_March_2018.pdf

ACTIONS THE PRESCRIBER MUST TAKE FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT

The prescriber whose prescription stock has gone missing may be instructed by NHS England to write and sign all newly issued prescription forms in a particular colour ink for a period of two months. NHS England will share this information via an alert to community pharmacies.

POST INCIDENT REVIEW

Following the loss/ theft of prescription forms it is good practice to undertake a significant event analysis (SEA.)
The outcome of the SEA and lessons learned should be shared with all staff involved in the management of controlled stationery.

East Midlands CDAO Team

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Management of Prescription Forms

NHS England Midlands

RECEIPT AND STORAGE

It is important to record delivered and stored prescription stock.
The delivery should be thoroughly checked against the order and delivery note and only be signed for if the packaging is sealed and unbroken.
Once the delivery has been checked, the boxes should be examined and as soon as practical the serial numbers checked against the delivery note.
Details of the delivery should be recorded.
If the forms do not arrive on the due date, within six working days from the date of the order being placed, the intended recipient should notify the suppliers of the missing prescription forms, so that enquiries can be made at an early stage.
Deliveries of prescription form stock should be securely stored as soon as practicable and treated as controlled stationery.
As a minimum, ***prescription forms should be kept in a locked cabinet within a lockable room or area.***
Access to the lockable room or area where prescription form stocks are kept, should be restricted to authorised individuals.

PRESCRIPTION FORM STOCK CONTROL

Organisations should maintain clear and unambiguous records on prescription stationery stock received and distributed.
The distribution of prescription forms to prescribers is the responsibility of the organisation.
The following information should be recorded:

- What has been received, along with serial number data
- Where items are being stored
- When prescription forms are issued to the authorised prescriber
- Details of who issued the forms
- To whom prescription forms were issued, along with the serial numbers of these forms
- The serial numbers of any unused prescription forms that have been returned

Details of prescription forms that have been destroyed (these records should be retained for at least 18 months).

USING PRESCRIPTION FORMS

As a matter of best practice, prescribers should keep a record of the serial numbers of prescription forms issued to them.
To reduce the risk of misuse, blank prescriptions should never be pre-signed.
Where possible, all unused forms should be returned to stock at the end of the session or day.
Any completed prescriptions should be stored in a locked drawer/cupboard.
Patients, temporary staff and visitors should never be left alone with prescription forms or allowed into secure areas where forms are stored.
Prescription pads must never be left in vehicles or doctors bags.

DESTRUCTION AND DISPOSAL

New prescription forms should not be issued to prescribers who have left or moved employment or who have been suspended from prescribing duties.
All unused prescription forms relating to individuals who no longer work or prescribe at the practice should be recovered and securely destroyed.
Personalised forms which are no longer in use should be securely destroyed (e.g. by shredding) before being put into confidential waste, with appropriate records kept.
The destruction of the forms should be witnessed by another member of staff. Records of forms destroyed should be kept for at least 18 months.

PRIVATE PRESCRIBERS

Doctors who privately prescribe Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 Controlled Drugs must have an individual private prescriber number. To request a private prescriber number a controlled drugs self-declaration form must be completed and submitted to the CDAO at NHS England. For more information, private prescribers should contact the Controlled Drugs Team: england.midlandscd@nhs.net