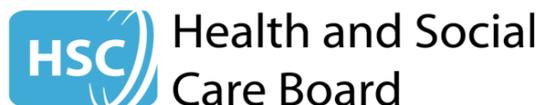


**Medicines Safety Advice**



To: GP Practices  
OOHs Providers

6<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Directorate of Integrated Care  
12-22 Linenhall Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8BS

Tel : 028 9536 3926  
Fax : 028 9536 3126  
[www.hscboard.hscni.net](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net)

Dear Colleague

### **Incidents regarding security of prescription pads**

Following a recent incident where a healthcare professional was able to remove blank prescription forms from a number of GP surgeries and OOHs providers without the knowledge or consent of staff in the practice, the following issues regarding the security of **all** types of prescription pads (i.e. patient computer and hand-written scripts, stock scripts, scripts issued to locums) have been highlighted:

#### **1. Signing of stock prescription forms**

During this incident, a number of stock prescription forms were signed by GPs who were not the GP named on the pre-printed form. Additionally, the GPs had not written their name in block capitals, as required on the form, making it very difficult to identify who had signed the script.

Locums, trainees and other GPs without their own cypher number from time to time may require stock drugs, including controlled drugs. This may be facilitated by using another GP's HS21S stock form. Authorisation for this should be given by the GP whose name appears on the HS21S form. The form should then be signed by the locum, trainee or other GP for whom the stock is intended, and **their** name written in block capitals on the line indicated.

#### **2. Recording of stock prescription forms**

The bottom (yellow) copy of stock prescription form should be retained by practice for a minimum of two years and stored in a designated file for future reference. It is

good practice to use this copy as a check to ensure that all ordered items have been received. It should be signed to confirm receipt and retained in the practice.

### **3. Storage of Prescription Forms**

Unused forms should be kept in a secure locked area to which access is kept to a minimum number of nominated people. A named person e.g. practice manager or clinical governance lead should be responsible for checking prescription storage and registers at regular intervals. It is the responsibility of individual prescribers to ensure the on-going security of prescription forms in their possession.

### **4. Issue of prescription forms**

When a new supply of prescriptions is issued for use to a prescriber or in a printer, entries should be made on the appropriate pages of the register for prescription forms. For locums and GP trainees, any handwritten prescription forms issued to them should be from a pad for the GP whose cypher number the prescriber is working under. Any unused forms must be returned at the end of their employment period and these forms should be returned to secure storage and a record made in the locum section of the register.

It is vital that each GP practice and OOH provider has appropriate security policies, procedures and systems in place to ensure the safe management of prescription forms. The HSCB Prescription Security Guidance and audit has been designed to assist practices in developing these. <http://www.medicinesgovernance.hscni.net/primary-care/>

If you have any queries regarding this letter, please contact your local Medicines Governance Adviser or Medicines Management Adviser.

Yours sincerely,



**Joe Brogan**  
**Asst Director Integrated Care**  
**Head of Pharmacy and**  
**Medicines Management**



**Dr Margaret O'Brien**  
**Asst Director Integrated Care**  
**Head of GMS**