

Security of prescription forms

Aide-mémoire for prescribers

- Be aware that blank prescription forms in the wrong hands are like a blank cheque with an extremely high street value.
- Prescription form stock in possession of prescribers should always be stored securely when not in use.
- Prescribers should keep a record of the serial numbers of prescription forms issued to them. The first and last serial numbers of pads should be recorded.
- Prescribers should be encouraged to use prescription forms in number sequence order to aid tracking of usage, should a potential loss occur
- To reduce the risk of misuse, blank prescriptions should never be pre-signed.
- Patients, temporary staff and visitors should never be left alone with prescription forms or allowed into secure areas where forms are stored.
- Prescribers on home visits should, before leaving the practice premises, record the serial numbers of any prescription forms/pads they are carrying. Only a small number of prescription forms should be taken on home visits – ideally between 6 and 10 – to minimise the potential loss.
- Prescribers on home visits/working in the community should take suitable precautions to prevent the loss or theft of prescription forms. Keep them out of sight when not in use and do not leave any prescription forms in vehicles overnight.
- Prescribers using the FP10PCD forms should exercise extra caution as there is greater potential for misuse of these forms.
- Blank or signed prescription forms should never be left at patients' homes, care homes or community pharmacies for GP or locum visits.
- 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.
- Spoiled or cancelled prescription forms should be retained for audit purposes.
- In the event of a loss or theft of prescription form stock, local procedures should be followed and the practice manager, area team, Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer and the police should be notified as required. The incident should also be recorded on the organisation's incident reporting system. NHS Protect should also be notified at prescription@nhsprotect.gsi.gov.uk using the form at annex B of the Security of prescription forms guidance document.