



Procedure for Lost, Stolen and Fraudulent Prescriptions

NHS England North Midlands (Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire)

NHS England and NHS Improvement



Procedure for Lost, Stolen and Fraudulent Prescriptions

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document details the local procedure for lost, stolen and fraudulent prescriptions for NHS England North Midlands in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and should be used in conjunction with the NHS Counter Fraud Authority 'Management and control of prescription forms: A guide for prescribers and health organisations': <https://cfa.nhs.uk/fraud-prevention/fraud-guidance>.

It provides guidance and establishes the principles that independent primary care contractors and their staff should follow (GPs, Independent Prescribers, Dentists and Community Pharmacists), for initiation of a local notification/alert process, which includes good practice guidance on the security and safe handling of prescriptions. (See section 9 Useful Links).

This procedure is intended for use by those in the following roles in primary care settings within Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire:

- Prescribers (including locum staff and practice staff)
- Pharmacists and dispensing staff
- Staff who manage, store and distribute prescription forms

- 1.2 The NHS Counter Fraud Authority security of prescriptions document highlights lost, stolen or fraudulent prescription forms and their consequent misuse as an area of concern for a number of reasons.

Blank computer prescription forms were originally considered to be of a low security risk but there are now an increasing number of instances when theft and computer software has been used to generate fraudulent prescriptions. The theft often only becomes apparent when fraudulent prescriptions are presented at pharmacies and work is then carried out to identify how and from where they have been stolen. Prescription forms should be treated as 'blank cheques' which, in the wrong hands, can lead to a misuse of NHS resources. Prescription forms/prescription pads are small items that are easy to conceal and move. Lost, stolen or fraudulent individual prescription forms, or prescription pads, can be used to illegally obtain controlled drugs (CDs), as well as other medicines either for illegitimate personal use, or for the purpose of selling them on. The prescription forms themselves are items of value which can be sold to a third party.

- 1.3 NHS England North Midlands (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire) Primary Care Contracting have overall responsibility for any amendments to this procedure, its ongoing development and distribution.
- 1.4 Due to NHS organisational changes, it is acknowledged that this is an evolving procedure and that there may be changes in practice and new situations that may arise before the next formal review of this procedure. Staff should therefore use professional judgement, be aware of their own limitations, seek advice and consult with senior staff where necessary if they are unsure of what action to take.



2 Aims

- 2.1 The aim of this procedure is to ensure a simple, rapid, failsafe system is in place:
- for an alert to be actioned (if appropriate to do so), following report of prescriptions which have been identified as lost, stolen, or are fraudulent, and
 - to minimise the risk to the health community of prescription forms being used illegally, which may result in harm.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 All organisations that manage and use prescription forms have a duty to implement procedures and systems to ensure, as far as practicable, that all prescription stationery is properly protected and secured. Primary care contractors have a role in following this procedure if they identify or suspect prescriptions forms are lost/stolen/fraudulent.
- 3.2 It is important that organisations have effective processes in place for staff to report incidents to ensure they are dealt with in accordance with NHS Counter Fraud Authority standards. In the event of a loss, suspected theft or a fraudulent prescription, staff should be supported and encouraged to report and be assured that the incident will be investigated and appropriate action taken.
- 3.3 NHS England North Midlands (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire) Primary Care Contracting Team have the responsibility for issuing the local alerts as appropriate.
- 3.4 In the event of fraud, loss or suspected theft of prescription form stock, the prescriber or staff member should notify the designated person with overall responsibility for prescription forms at their organisation, the Controlled Drug Accountable Officer (CDAO) if applicable and the police as required. The prescriber should refer to their organisation's nominated Local Counter Fraud Specialist (LCFS) if a fraud has occurred.

4 Lost, Stolen and Fraudulent Prescriptions

- 5.1 When pharmacists have any doubts about the authenticity of a prescription they, or a member of the dispensing staff should contact the prescriber to establish if the prescription is genuine or is fraudulent. If this is done by telephone, the telephone number should be obtained from an alternative source e.g. the telephone directory rather than relying on the information on the prescription form. All prescribers and staff dealing with prescriptions should be aware of these requirements, to ensure that the relevant checks are conducted.



Examples of fraudulent activity to look out for:

- Addition (amendment to the original prescription)
- Excessive quantities
- Medicine known to be commonly misused
- Uncharacteristic prescribing or method of writing prescription by a known doctor
- 'Dr' inserted before (or after) the prescriber's signature

A forged or fraudulent prescription can be a genuine prescription form which:

- has been stolen
- has been altered by someone other than an authorised prescriber (for example to increase the quantity or dose, or to add additional items)
- is not signed by an authorised prescriber.

These precautions should be considered by community pharmacy staff for all prescriptions for all drugs, but particularly controlled drugs and those drugs liable to misuse.

- 5.2 Pharmacists and pharmacy staff are encouraged to be proactive in questioning any discrepancies on prescriptions. Under no circumstances should pharmacy staff compromise their safety; only challenging presenting individuals if it is safe and appropriate to do so.

5 Reporting Actions

- 6.1 If a prescriber or community pharmacy staff member suspects that a prescription(s) is lost, stolen or fraudulent, they must contact NHS England North Midlands, Primary Care Contracting Team at Birch House either by email or telephone immediately or if out of hours the next working day.

📧 Derbyshire: e.derbyshirenottinghamshire-pharmacyderbys@nhs.net

📧 Nottinghamshire: e.derbyshirenottinghamshire-pharmacynotts@nhs.net

☎ Telephone: 077 303 80379

The Primary Care Contracting Team will send an alert (if appropriate to do so), by email to the contacts on the lost/stolen prescription distribution list and the reporter. If the incident occurs on the border of Derbyshire or Nottinghamshire, the neighbouring region or regions will also be informed.



- 6.2 The prescriber or staff member must also notify:
- the designated person with overall responsibility for prescription forms in their organisation
 - the Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer (CDAO) **if applicable**
 - the Police if applicable (by dialling 101).
- 6.3 Prescribers/Practice Managers should also refer to the NHS Counter Fraud Authority 'Management and control of prescription forms: A guide for prescribers and health organisations': <https://cfa.nhs.uk/fraud-prevention/fraud-guidance>
- The matter should be recorded as a security incident on the organisation's incident reporting system. NHS Counter Fraud Authority should be notified of the incident by completing their notification form at <https://cfa.nhs.uk/reportfraud> or telephone the Reporting Line 0800 028 4060.
- 6.4 In the event of loss or theft of a prescription pad the Primary Care Contracting Team may allocate a specific number for the prescriber(s) to quote on their prescriptions and will specify the colour of the ink to be used to sign prescriptions (usually red or green) for a period of 2 months following the loss/theft. The allocated number must be clearly written on the prescriptions.
- 6.5 In the event that the prescriber's name is unknown on the lost/stolen prescription(s), all prescribers within the practice must sign their prescription in the agreed colour of ink and use the allocated number for a period of 2 months.

6 Private Controlled Drugs Prescriptions

- 7.1 Private CD prescriptions forms (pink FP10PCD) must be used for any private prescribing of schedule 2 and schedule 3 controlled drugs. A private prescriber is required to have a private prescriber identification number allocated by NHS England Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer. Pharmacists must not dispense any private prescriptions for CDs unless they are written on a FP10PCD.
- 7.2 If a prescriber suspects that a private controlled drug prescription or prescriptions have been lost or stolen, then they must follow the procedure as outlined in section 6 Reporting Actions.

7 Pharmacy Reward Scheme

The Pharmacy Reward Scheme allows pharmacies to claim a financial reward where they have identified a fraudulent prescription and thereby either prevented fraud or contributed with valuable information to the investigation of fraud.

To claim a reward under the scheme contact:

NHS Counter Fraud Authority, Skipton House, 80 London Road, London, SE1 6LH
Telephone: 0207 895 4500

NHS England and NHS Improvement



Email: generalenquiries@nhsca.gsi.gov.uk Website: <https://cfa.nhs.uk/home>

More information on the prescription reward scheme can be found at:

https://contactcentreservices.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/selfnhsukokb/AskUs_PS/en-gb/7706/miscellaneous-pharmacy-payments/17498/information-on-the-pharmacy-reward-scheme

8 Types of Prescriptions

This procedure applies to the following prescription types, although not all of these may be in circulation within NHS England North Midlands (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire)

Prescription type	Who they are used by	Prescription type	Who they are used by
(GREEN) FP10 FP10SS	GP Nurse Prescriber Nurse Independent /Supplementary Prescriber Independent Prescribers Supplementary Prescribers Hospital Unit	(BLUE) FP10MDA-SS	GP Nurse Independent /Supplementary Prescriber Independent Prescribers Supplementary Prescribers Hospital Unit
FP10NC	GP	FP10MDA-S	GP
FP10HNC	Hospital Unit	FP10MDA-SP	Independent Prescriber Supplementary Prescribers
(YELLOW) FP10D	Dentist	FP10HMDA	Hospital Unit
(LILAC) FP10PN	Community Practitioner Nurse Prescriber Nurse Independent/Supplementary Prescriber	(PINK) FP10PCDSS	Private prescribers issuing Schedule 2 and 3 Controlled Drugs dispensed by community pharmacy
FP10SP	Community Practitioner Nurse Prescriber Nurse Independent/Supplementary Prescriber Out of Hours Prescribers (used by OOH to record items supplied directly to a patient, not dispensed by a community pharmacy)	FP10PCDNC	Hospital Unit
FP10P-REC (Non-FP10 supply form)	Community Practitioner Nurse Prescriber Nurse Independent/Supplementary Prescriber		

<http://psnc.org.uk/dispensing-supply/receiving-a-prescription/is-this-prescription-form-valid/>



9 Useful Links

Counter Fraud Authority Aide-Memoires for management and control of prescription forms for organisations to use within their service:

Practice Managers: <https://cfa.nhs.uk/resources/downloads/guidance/Aide-memoire%20for%20practice%20managers.pdf>

Prescribers: <https://cfa.nhs.uk/resources/downloads/guidance/Aide-memoire%20for%20prescribers.pdf>

10 References

NHS Counter Fraud Authority - *Security of Prescription forms guidance updated March 2018*: <https://cfa.nhs.uk/fraud-prevention/fraud-guidance>

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC): <http://psnc.org.uk/>

NHS Drug Tariff: <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/drug-tariff>



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