**PrescQIPP CQC - Security of blank prescriptions**

**Prescribing Tip For Information**



A prescription form is an asset that has a financial value. It is in effect a blank cheque open to potential misuse. Theft of prescription forms and their resulting fraudulent misuse is a serious concern. It can lead to loss of valuable NHS resources and potentially result in serious harm. Forms can be used to illegally get controlled drugs (CDs) and other medicines. This can be for illegitimate personal use or to sell on.

At CQC inspections, inspectors look at how medicines and medicines-related stationery is managed (ordered, transported, stored, distributed, and disposed of safely and securely).

The CQC inspectors expect GPs (including locums), other prescribers in the practice and all staff involved in the management of prescription forms to be able to explain how the practice manages and secures blank prescription forms and paper. This should be in line with national guidance unless the practice can justify, with risk assessment and mitigation, why this is not the case.

**They also expect:**

* Clear and unambiguous records of prescription stationery stock received.
* Clear arrangements for the arrival of prescription form stock. This should include a pre-determined date of arrival where possible, so a missed delivery can be followed up quickly within 6 working days from the date of the order being placed.
* Prescription form stock checked on delivery. Bar codes recorded, checked against the delivery note and the stock securely stored as soon as possible.
* Stock stored securely, at least in a locked cabinet within a lockable room or area.
* Access to forms restricted to authorised individuals.
* Record kept of pre-printed prescription form stock distribution within the practice including the serial numbers, where, when (date/time) and to whom prescription forms have been distributed, using a computer system helps reconciliation and audit.
* Records kept of prescription forms that are returned to stock or destroyed, and the reasons for destruction.
* Clear storage system for prescribers using individualised forms to be kept in a locked space and not with patients’ notes with the serial number of the first remaining form noted at the end of each patient session.
* Appropriate measures are in place to keep forms secure.

**Guidance on the following should also be adhered to:**

* Destroying spoiled or duplicate prescriptions
* Sending prescriptions by post
* Transferring prescriptions from one site to another (for example to a branch surgery)
* Locum access to prescriptions
* Alerts, investigations, and sanctions
* Audit
* Security of computer systems
* Missing or lost prescription forms
* Forged prescriptions
* Reporting incidents

[gp-mythbusters/gp-mythbuster-23-security-blank-prescription-forms](https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/gp-mythbusters/gp-mythbuster-23-security-blank-prescription-forms) and <https://cfa.nhs.uk/fraud-prevention/fraud-guidance>

**Referring to the PrescQIPP sample policy below - Section2/ Management Control/ Prescription security, please review your Practice Medicines Policy to ensure that your current systems with regards to prescription security are robust.**

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**To contact the Medicines Optimisation Team please phone 01772 214302**

 **If you have any suggestions for future topics to cover in our prescribing tips please contact** **Nicola.schaffel@nhs.net**

 **All content accurate and correct on the date of issue of this tip.**