

Controlled Drug Guidelines in Care Homes

Storage

Secure storage of controlled drugs (CDs) is specified in the Misuse of Drugs Act (Safe Custody) Regulations 2007. Every care home must store controlled drugs in a CD cupboard. The legal requirements for CD storage are:

- Secured to a wall and fixed with bolts that are not accessible from outside the cupboard
- Fitted with a robust lock
- Made of metal with strong hinges.

Access to the CD cabinet must be restricted. The key must be kept under the control of a designated person, and there must be a clear audit trail of the holders of the key.

If a person brings in their medication which includes a CD, it must be removed from the rest of the medication and stored in the CD cupboard. (Unless the person is self-administering, have lockable storage available to them, and are assessed as safe to do so according to the care home's policy).

Writing of Controlled Drugs on a MAR chart

Transcribing of all medications, including CDs must be done legibly. They must be signed by the person writing them and by a trained and competent witness.

Records for controlled drugs

Care home staff must keep a record of the receipt, administration and disposal of CDs.

- Administration must be recorded both on the MAR and in the CD register
- A CD register must be a bound book with numbered pages
- There must be a separate page for each CD and each strength, for each person
- The balance remaining for each product must be recorded. This should be checked at each administration and on a regular basis. Tablets, capsules, patches, and injections must be counted. Liquids can be estimated, and the balance checked when the bottle is finished or sent for destruction.

Disposal of controlled drugs

Special arrangements apply to the disposal of CDs in care homes. There are some differences for care homes with personal care only and care homes with nursing.

Care homes with personal care only

Staff should separate unwanted or out-of-date person's own controlled drugs from current stock and store them in the controlled drugs cupboard, until they are returned to the community pharmacy for destruction. A record must be made in the controlled drug register. This must be signed by the person making the entry and another suitably trained person as a witness.

All medicines, including controlled drugs, must be promptly returned to a community pharmacy. Pharmacies are contractually obliged to dispose of medicines waste for these services. The service does not require a T28 waste exemption as the pharmacy will denature the controlled drugs.

Good practice involves one staff member making the record of controlled drug destruction in the controlled drugs register and a second member of staff to check and sign the record. This helps to verify that the register is accurate. Some pharmacists will sign the register to acknowledge receipt. This is not a legal requirement.

Care homes with nursing

A person's own individually labelled controlled drugs must be denatured before handing to the waste disposal company. The Environment Agency classes this as processing waste. The nursing home will need to apply for a T28 waste exemption. This is free of charge.

Good practice involves one staff member making the record of controlled drug destruction in the controlled drugs register and a second member of staff to act as a witness and check and sign the record.

Common Controlled Drugs and legal requirements for care homes

Examples include:

Schedule 2:

CD	Brand names	Legal Requirements
Morphine	Zomorph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store in a CD cupboard Record in the CD register. <p>*Oramorph oral solution 10mg/5ml is not a schedule 2 controlled drug. However, CD storage and CD records are a good practice recommendation.</p>
	MST	
	Sevredol	
	MXL	
	Oramorph Concentrated oral solution 100mg/5ml *	
Diamorphine		
Pethidine		
Methadone	Physeptone	
Methylphenidate	Ritalin	
Fentanyl	Durogesic, Matrifen, Mezolar...	

Schedule 3:

CD	Brand names	Legal Requirements
Buprenorphine	Temgesic (tablets) Butrans/Butec... (patches)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buprenorphine and Temazepam must be stored in a CD cupboard. Other listed schedule 3 controlled drugs do not need CD storage. None of the controlled drugs in this schedule need to be recorded in the CD register but this is a good practice recommendation.
Midazolam	Buccolam, Hypnovel, Epistat...	
Temazepam		
Phenobarbitone		
Tramadol	Zydol	
Pregabalin	Lyrica	
Gabapentin		

Schedule 4:

CD	Brand names	Legal Requirements
Diazepam	Valium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No legal requirements for care homes
Zopiclone	Zimovane	