

prescription fraud

e-newsletter

Issue 2 : April 2016



Welcome to this edition of Counter Fraud Services' new prescription fraud e-newsletter, providing advice and guidance in countering this type of criminal activity.

What is a fraudulent medication request?

Incidents of Fraudulent Medication involve a person practising some form of deception or forgery, or a combination of both, in order to obtain medication in greater quantities than originally prescribed or to obtain medication not prescribed at all.

These persons may obtain or attempt to obtain the medication to consume themselves or for the diversion to others.

There is a potential risk to the user's health as a result of taking medication that was not prescribed for them. Falsely obtaining or attempting to obtain medication is also a criminal offence with the potential of receiving a heavy penalty.

Practitioners/Contractors should have appropriate systems and procedures in place to ensure that, where possible, attempts to obtain medication by fraud are not successful.

Common types of fraudulent medication activity

Altered Prescriptions

These are prescriptions that have been altered by patients with the intention to increase the quantities or the strength of medication prescribed.

Medication not prescribed but added to a prescription is also considered as an altered prescription.

Electronic prescriptions, as well as handwritten prescriptions, can also be inappropriately altered with the perpetrator including the GPs initials to

increase the possibility of the altered medications being accepted as genuine and therefore dispensed.

Counter Fraud Services ask that GPs do not manually amend prescriptions.

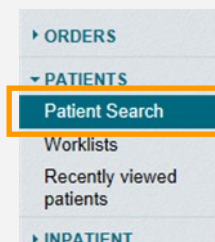
We would also ask Community Pharmacists who are presented with a prescription where the medication has been amended or medication added verify that these amendments with the prescriber.

Searching for Temporary Residents on NIECR

Staff within the primary care setting are able to search NIECR for patients visiting their practice on a temporary basis and we strongly recommend that this search is carried out before any prescriptions are issued to verify the patient's identity. To search for a patient on NIECR follow the instructions below:

1

From the menu on the left hand side of the GP Homepage click on the 'Patient Search' option.



2

The default search screen will require a Health & Care Number. If this is known, enter it in the relevant text box and click 'Search'.

A screenshot of the 'Identifier Search' screen. The screen has a left-hand menu with 'ORDERS', 'REPORTS', 'DATA QUALITY', 'PATIENTS', and 'INPATIENT'. Under 'PATIENTS', 'Patient Search' is selected. The main area is titled 'Identifier Search'. It has a text box for 'H+C No. or Casenote' (highlighted with an orange box) and a button 'Use Demographic Search if no H+C Number'. Below the text box are 'Search' and 'Reset' buttons. A note at the bottom says 'Enter search criteria above and hit 'Search'. NIECR is for direct care only. Please note that all patient searches will be audited.'

3

If you do not have the Health & Care Number choose the 'Use Demographic Search' button.

A screenshot of the 'Identifier Search' screen. The screen is the same as the previous one, but the 'Use Demographic Search if no H+C Number' button is highlighted with an orange box.

You will then be required to enter 'Surname', 'Forename' and 'DOB' and a reason why you are using this search function.

A screenshot of the 'Demographic Search' screen. The screen has a left-hand menu with 'ORDERS', 'REPORTS', 'DATA QUALITY', 'PATIENTS', and 'OUTPATIENT'. Under 'PATIENTS', 'Patient Search' is selected. The main area is titled 'Demographic Search'. It has a text box for 'Surname', a text box for 'Forename', a date picker for 'Date of Birth', a dropdown for 'DOB +/-', a radio button for 'Gender' (with options 'Male', 'Female', 'Not Specified'), a radio button for 'Previous Surnames' (with options 'No', 'Yes'), a dropdown for 'Advanced Search' (with options 'No', 'Yes'), and a text box for 'No H+C Reason'. Below the text boxes are 'Search' and 'Reset' buttons. A note at the bottom says 'Enter search criteria above and hit 'Search'. NIECR is for direct care only. Please note that all patient searches will be audited.'

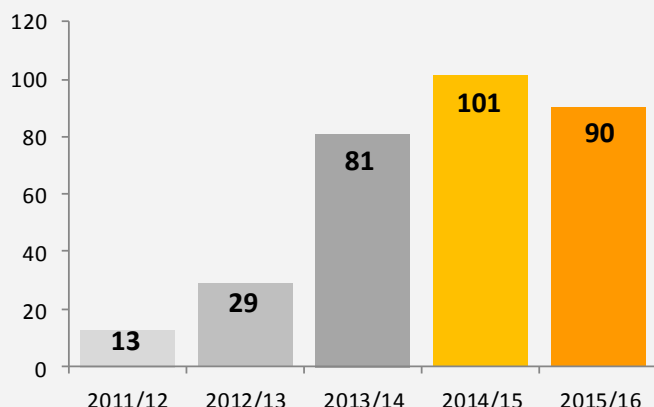
4

Once the values have been entered click 'Search'. The matching values will be returned and you can then choose the relevant patient to access their NIECR record.

CFS Facts and Figures

Reports Received

The chart below records the number of reported incidents received by Counter Fraud Services in the past 5 financial years.

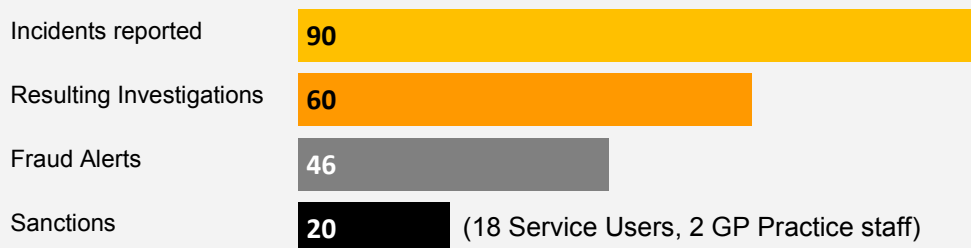


Commonly requested drugs

The most common types of medication requested include hypnotics, opiates and benzodiazepines such as:

- Diazepam
- Lorazepam
- Temazepam
- Nitrazepam
- Amitriptyline
- Co-Codamol
- Codeine Phosphate
- Paracetamol
- Solapadol
- Tramadol
- Dihydrocodeine
- Lyrica/Pregabalin
- Lamotrigine
- Zopiclone
- Cyclizine
- Fluoxetine
- Oxycontin
- Quetiapine

Last year (April 2015 - March 2016)



Recent Case Results

GP receptionist handed Adult Caution for prescription offences

A GP receptionist who created prescriptions without authorisation received an Adult Caution on 19 February 2016 following an investigation by Counter Fraud Services.

Kiera Saunders, from Belfast, was cautioned for fraud by abuse of position, having created a number of prescriptions and presented these to Community Pharmacies to obtain medication.

Patient found guilty of prescription fraud

A male service user who presented an amended prescription to a Community Pharmacist in an attempt to obtain medication that had not prescribed was found guilty of fraud at Court following a counter fraud investigation.

Adrian Aicken, from Comber, was convicted at Court on the 8th January 2016 and was sentenced to serve two months in prison.

Further Information

Additional information on prescription fraud including detailed guidance and online reporting forms are available at: www.cfps.hscni.net/reportfmr.

Current guidance issued by the HSCB on fraudulent medication is available at:

[Fraudulent Attempts to Obtain Medicines for Patients Detained In Prison](#)

[Learning for GP Practices arising from Incidents of Prescription Fraud](#)

[Hand written amendments to prescriptions](#)