

Fraudulent prescriptions

WHAT IS A FORGED OR FRAUDULENT PRESCRIPTION?

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

COLOUR OF THE PRESCRIPTION FORM

SERIAL NUMBERS

DATE PRESCRIPTION ISSUED

ADDRESS OF PRESCRIBER

ALTERATIONS OR ADDITIONS

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 add additional items)
- Is not signed by an authorised prescriber or it could be a fake prescription form.

The colours of legitimate forms are deliberately hard to copy, so a fake one tends to stand out.

All prescription forms have serial numbers. An alert may have been issued to look out for prescriptions with particular numbers. You can also check with NHS Prescription Services' Compliance Unit to find out if a prescription is from a batch reported missing.

Remember the time intervals within which prescriptions must be presented for dispensing. There may be a genuine reason for having an old but still valid prescription but if so the customer will tell you.

You know the surgeries from which you normally get prescriptions. Some areas may see more out of town prescribers e.g. holiday areas. However bear in mind that the prescription may have been stolen.

Alterations that have been seen include:

- Overwriting both printed and handwritten items on prescriptions
- Overwriting the prescriber's signature
- Use of amateur type-setting kits to print onto stolen prescriptions

Does the handwriting match hand-written scripts from that prescriber that you've seen previously? Is the spacing sensible?

Are the drug names spelt correctly and are the quantities and directions logical?

You tend to know the signatures of the prescribers local to the pharmacy. If the signature is not known and you are concerned, do you have another example of it in the current month's prescriptions? There have been cases where an amendment was made to a prescription and the person who did it then initialled the amendment to make it look like the GP had made the change. If you are unsure about a prescription contact the prescriber.



Turn over for what to do if you are presented with a forged or fraudulent prescription

What to do if you are presented with a forged or fraudulent prescription

DO NOT PLACE YOURSELF OR A COLLEAGUE IN DANGER AT ANY TIME

If threatened, or if you believe that the person may become violent, then telephone the police as soon as you can on 999.

DO NOT DISPENSE	You should not dispense the medication but keep the prescription – be careful not to give the person a chance to snatch it back!
STALL FOR TIME	Inform the patient that you can't dispense the prescription immediately, and ask them to either wait or return later (if possible, ask them to say when they will return). Delaying tactics to try include; lack of stock, lunchtime closure or backlog of work.
CHECK WITH THE PRESCRIBER	Telephone the prescriber to confirm whether the prescription has indeed been forged. Use a published telephone number rather than any number given on the suspect prescription unless you are sure it is correct.
CALL THE POLICE	If the person who presented the prescription is waiting in the pharmacy, or is expected to return shortly, call the police on 999, explain the situation and ask them to attend immediately. If it is not known when the person may return, or they are to return another day, telephone the police on 101 and report the crime. In either case, obtain a crime reference number from the police.
GET BACK-UP	If your pharmacy is part of a larger store which has security staff, arrange for a member of security staff to come to the pharmacy (straight away, if the person is waiting, or in advance of the time that the person is expected to return).
IF THE PATIENT COMES BACK LATER	If the patient returns later, if possible ask them to wait (using the delaying tactics above) and contact the police on 999 as above. If that is not possible, say that you are unable to dispense the prescription because you believe it may not be genuine/ may have been altered, and that the police have been informed. If nothing else, this may deter them from attempting to use any other stolen prescriptions they may have.
TELL NHS ENGLAND	Provide details of the incident, the prescription, the prescriber and the prescription number. This is so that the origin of the prescription can be traced, and an alert circulated in case other stolen prescriptions are presented to other pharmacies. Derbyshire Pharmacies contact 01138 251854 or email e.derbyshirenottinghamshire-pharmacyderbys@nhs.net Nottinghamshire Pharmacies contact 01138 251854 or email e.derbyshirenottinghamshire-pharmacynotts@nhs.net Shropshire and Staffordshire Pharmacies contact 0113 8254 630 or email england.cd_x24n@nhs.net
TELL NHS PROTECT (COUNTER FRAUD)	If you have already notified the police, advise NHS Protect of the crime reference number and of the name, number and station of the police officer dealing with the case. NHS Protect can be contacted on 0800 028 4060 or via www.reportnhsfraud.co.uk
KEEP A RECORD	Record all the details, including a description of the person, and make a note of any telephone conversations. If there would have been any CCTV footage of the person presenting the prescription or when they returned to the pharmacy later, retain and quarantine this footage so that it can be provided to the Police or NHS Protect investigators at a later stage. If the police or NHS Protect investigators wish to take the original prescription away as evidence, retain a copy in the pharmacy.
CLAIM THE REWARDS	A pharmacy which identifies a forged prescription can claim a Reward Payment under Part XIVA of the Drug Tariff. To claim this payment, call 0800 0686161 or 0191 2046300 within 7 days of the incident. You will be sent a claim form but a claim can only be made if the prescription has been retained.

NHS England North Midlands Controlled Drugs Team Contact Details: The Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer for NHS England North Midlands is Samantha Travis, Samantha.travis@nhs.net

The Accountable Officer is supported by: Selina Utting, Assistant to CDAO, Tel: 0113 8255479, Selina.utting@nhs.net

Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire: _Margaret Farrow-Johnson Controlled Drugs Support Officer, Tel: 01138 249774 Margaret.farrow-johnson@nhs.net

Shropshire & Staffordshire: Eleanor Carnegie Controlled Drugs Support Officer, Tel: 0113 8254630, Eleanor.carnegie@nhs.net