Dear Colleagues

SECURITY MEASURES FOR ORDERING AND COLLECTING PRESCRIPTIONS

HSCB has recently investigated an incident whereby an individual had been obtaining prescriptions by deception from a GP practice for sleeping tablets on a repeated basis and over a significant period of time. The individual had been personally ordering and collecting the prescriptions from the practice and had become familiar to practice staff. Certain circumstances subsequently led to suspicion and when challenged as to her identity, the individual gave a false name and left the premises.

Based on learning identified from investigation of this incident, we request that all GPs practices consider the following recommendations:

1. Establish a process in relation to the information required to confirm the identity of anyone ordering or collecting a prescription. All relevant practice staff should be made aware of this process.

2. Be particularly vigilant in relation to prescription requests involving drugs liable to abuse/misuse e.g. anxiolytics, hypnotics and analgesics.

3. Patients should take responsibility for ordering their own prescriptions unless there are exceptional circumstances which must be agreed in advance and recorded in the patient’s clinical record. Alternatives to telephone ordering may provide greater security – see repeat/acute prescribing protocol guideline at link below: http://www.medicinesgovernance.hscni.net/primary-care/gp-practice/repeatacute-prescribing-audit/

4. Review repeat and acute prescribing protocols to ensure that systems are as robust as possible.
5. Ensure that medication reviews are carried out regularly to confirm that:
   a. ongoing prescribing is **appropriate and necessary**;
   b. the patient is actually getting the prescriptions as detailed in their computer record.

If you require any further information please access the resources on the Medicines Governance website (link above) or the Primary Care Intranet, or contact your Pharmacy Adviser.

Yours sincerely

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