Security of prescription forms

Aide-mémoire for prescribers

(Based on advice from NHS Protect)

- Be aware that blank prescription forms in the wrong hands are like a blank cheque with an extremely high street value.

- Prescription forms in possession of prescribers should always be stored securely when not in use and be treated as would a prescriber’s own credit cards, purse or wallet and not left unattended in clinic rooms and patients’ homes.

- Prescribers should keep a record of the serial numbers of prescription forms issued to them. The first and last serial numbers of pads should be recorded, ignoring the last digit, which is just a random security number.

- Prescribers should use prescription forms in number sequence order to aid tracking of usage, should a potential loss occur.

- To reduce the risk of misuse, blank prescriptions must never be pre-signed.

- Patients, temporary staff and visitors should never be left alone with prescription forms or allowed into secure areas where forms are stored.

- Prescribers on home visits should, before leaving the practice premises, record the serial numbers of any prescription forms/pads they are carrying. Only a small number of prescription forms should be taken on home visits – ideally an absolute maximum of 10 – to minimise the potential loss.

- Prescribers on home visits/working in the community should take suitable precautions to prevent the loss or theft of prescription forms. Keep them out of sight when not in use and do not leave any prescription forms in vehicles overnight.

- Blank prescription forms, must never be left at patients’ homes, care homes or community pharmacies.

- Personalised forms which are no longer in use should be securely destroyed (e.g. by shredding) before being put into confidential waste, with appropriate records kept.

- Spoiled or cancelled prescription forms should be recorded in a ‘Destroyed Prescription record Book’ before destruction by shredding in front of a witness who should also sign the book.

- In the event of a loss or theft of prescription forms, the Trust’s procedures for dealing with lost or stolen prescriptions must be followed: www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/node/1482/attachment

The incident should also be recorded on the organisation’s incident reporting system.