Assurance for Controlled Drugs
Briefing for Medical Directors, Chief Pharmacists, Directors of Nursing and CDAOs

A number of recent incidents nationally have highlighted that not all organisations have robust mechanisms in place to deliver assurance on safe use of controlled drugs. Organisations involved in the use of controlled drugs at any point, whether it is prescribing, supply or administration, should ensure they are compliant with legislation and providing assurance to their commissioners on this matter.

There is a support network available through the Controlled Drugs Local Intelligence Networks (CDLINs) to share good practice and learning from incidents.

Providers

All designated bodies under the legislation (The Controlled Drugs (Supervision of Management and Use) Regulations 2013 Available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/373/introduction/made) must have a CDAO registered with the CQC.

A CDAO of a provider body must establish and operate appropriate arrangements for securing the safe management and use of CDs and to review them as appropriate. In general, the CDAO has a variety of duties and functions such as to:

- *ensure the safe and effective use and management of CDs within their own organisations and by anybody or person providing services to their organisation;*
- *ensure monitoring and auditing of the management and use of CDs;*
- *maintain a record of concerns regarding relevant individuals;*
- *assess and investigate concerns;*
- *take appropriate action if there are well-founded concerns;*
- *establish arrangements for sharing information;*
- *produce quarterly reports of CD occurrences for the lead NHSCB or HB CDAO;*
- *ensure adequate and up to date standard operating procedures (SOPs) are in place in relation to the management and use of CDs;*
- *ensure relevant individuals receive appropriate information, education or training; ensure adequate destruction and disposal arrangements for CDs.*

A variety of individuals hold the CDAO role depending on their organisational responsibilities however it tends to be the Medical Director, the Chief Pharmacist or the Director of Nursing. Each of these three roles is key to the delivery of the safe use of controlled drugs across the organisation and should be working together to assure the Board – whether they are the CDAO or not. This will include actions such as supporting the CDAO in managing change, following through on the results of audits showing poor performance and sharing learning.

Assurance should include:

1. Regular submitting of occurrence reports to the NHS England CDAO, copied to the relevant quality leads at CCGs.
2. Evidence of reporting to board level through the appropriate committees with audits, incidents and learning.
3. Evidence of training of staff including the CDAO.

4. Evidence of addressing concerns and sharing relevant information via the local CDLIN.
5. Annual report on safe management and use of controlled drugs in the organisation.

Commissioners

Commissioners (such as CCGs and local authorities) should receive regular reporting from the CDAO at the CQRM or relevant interface committee on medicines safety on the safe use of controlled drugs. Reporting would usually be quarterly to coincide with occurrence reports but may be more or less often depending on the provider. There should also be regular communication between the CCG and the provider on delivery of governance arrangements such as relevant training, management of risks etc. CCGs and local authorities are members of CDLINs and can triangulate the information shared by providers at this meeting with local intelligence.

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