

12th January 2016

Dear Colleague

## STORAGE AND DENATURING OF MEDICINES FOR DISPOSAL

All community pharmacies within Northern Ireland are contracted by the HSCB to provide a service to accept for disposal any medication returned by members of the public. An incident has been reported to the HSCB where an out of date controlled drug was removed without consent from a pharmaceutical waste bin in a community pharmacy by a member of the staff and taken from the pharmacy.

Learning from the incident has highlighted the following points:

- The Medicines (Pharmacies) (Responsible Pharmacist) Regulations 2008 detail that Pharmacy Procedures must cover as a minimum, arrangements to ensure that medicinal products are disposed of, in a safe and effective manner
- Pharmacies should have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) relating to the management of clinical waste which each member of staff should read, understand and sign to confirm that they will comply with it. It should be highlighted to all staff that once medication is placed in a pharmaceutical waste bin, it should NEVER be removed.
- All medicinal waste should be placed in dedicated pharmaceutical waste bins. It is important that both open bins which are in use and closed sealed bins waiting collection for disposal are stored safely and in a secure place away from areas of public access within the pharmacy premises. Bins should be stored in an area of the pharmacy where they are in view of the pharmacist.
- Controlled Drugs in Schedules 2, 3 and 4 (part 1) should be denatured and rendered irretrievable before disposal in clinical waste. This means that all medication needs to be removed from its packaging e.g. liquid or powder from ampoules, tablets or capsules from blister or foil package and then denatured before disposal. Wherever

practicable, CD denaturing kits should be used and the used denaturing kits should then be placed in pharmaceutical waste bins. Regardless of the methods used for denaturing, pharmacists must take measures to ensure safety of personnel and non-contamination of the environment.

For further information please refer to:

HSCB Guidance on the Management of Clinical Waste in Community Pharmacy

<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2589.htm>.

If you have any queries about this, please contact your local pharmaceutical services adviser.

Yours sincerely,



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