

Gateway Number 17219

To:
NHS Acute Trust (including Foundation Trusts):-
Chief Executives
Medical Directors
Nursing Directors
Chief Pharmacists

Date: 9 February 2012

Dear colleague

Medicines security

In July 2011, Trusts were reminded of the importance of handling and storing medicines in a safe and secure manner (http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Bulletins/theweek/DH_128632).

To protect patients, it is essential that all hospital Trusts have in place a robust policy for the safe and secure handling of medicines. The policy must be signed off by the Trust Board. All staff involved with the prescribing, dispensing and administration of medicines must be familiar with it, as must managers involved in clinical areas. The policy should include a programme of regular audit, including unannounced visits to clinical areas by senior nursing and pharmacy staff, as well as mechanisms to promptly agree and implement any remedial action.

The standards for the safe and secure handling of medicines can be found in "The Safe and Secure Handling of Medicines: A Team Approach" (www.rpharms.com/support-pdfs/safsechandmeds.pdf). CQC, during its visits, expect to see evidence of compliance with this document.

Evidence has recently emerged, following reports last month on Sky News, that some Trusts may not always be complying with these standards. Whilst some improvements have been made, in order to assure and sustain compliance and improvement, we would ask all acute NHS trusts to undertake a comprehensive audit of the safe and secure handling of medicines by **31 March 2012**. A summary of the results, together with any robust, detailed, remedial action plans, should be signed off by the Chief Executive and Chief Pharmacist, returned to the CQC at MedicinesSecurityAudit@cqc.org.uk and copied to the relevant SHA pharmacy lead. CQC will utilise this information to inform its programme of risk based inspections. If you have already carried out a comprehensive audit since July 2011, then a summary of the results from that, together with any robust, detailed, remedial action plan, will suffice and should similarly be sent to CQC and the relevant SHA pharmacy lead. NHS foundation trusts may choose to do likewise, but are not required to do so.


A list of all the SHA pharmacy leads is enclosed with contact details.

Enquiries about this letter should be addressed to MPIG Support at mpig.support@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for your help with this important matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Keogh', with a horizontal line underneath.

Professor Sir Bruce Keogh
NHS Medical Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Beasley', with a horizontal line underneath.

Dame Christine Beasley
Chief Nursing Office

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Ridge', with a horizontal line underneath.

Dr Keith Ridge
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

Copied to:

SHA Medical Directors
SHA Nursing Directors
SHA Pharmacy and Prescribing Leads

SHA Pharmacy and Prescribing Leads

London

London SHA

Helen Marlow - Helen.marlow@london.nhs.uk
David Webb - David.webb@londonscg.nhs.uk

Midlands and East

East of England SHA

Carol Roberts - Carol.roberts@eoe.nhs.uk

East Midlands SHA

Tom Gray - Tom.gray@nhs.net

West Midlands SHA

Richard Seal - Richard.Seal@westmidlands.nhs.uk

North of England

North East SHA

Janette Stephenson - Janette.Stephenson@northeast.nhs.uk

North West SHA

Vic Standing - Victor.Standing@lrippy.nhs.uk

Yorkshire and The Humber SHA

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South of England

South Central SHA

Jenny Dorey - Jenny.Dorey@southcentral.nhs.uk
Clare Howard - Clare.Howard@southcentral.nhs.uk

South East Coast SHA

Gail Fleming - Gail.Fleming@bsuh.nhs.uk
Sue Mills - sue.mills@esdwpct.nhs.uk

South West SHA

Jill Loader - Jill.loader@southwest.nhs.uk
Steve Brown - Stephen.brown@uhbristol.nhs.uk