

12 August 2010

Gateway Reference:14654

Dear Chief Executives, SHA Pharmacy / Prescribing Leads and Medical Directors

**Care Quality Commission (CQC): The Safer Management of Controlled Drugs Annual Report 2009.**

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) are responsible for making sure healthcare providers and regulators are creating a safer environment for the management of controlled drugs. In support of this, the CQC issue an annual report, the third of which for 2009 was published on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2010. It is available now for download from the CQC website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk).

In this latest report, the CQC have described how the new arrangements introduced in the Health Act 2006 “have matured, and become embedded in the structure of healthcare organisations.”

However, the CQC has made three recommendations, as follows:

- Chief executives and accountable officers should continue to keep the safe management of controlled drugs a high priority on their organisation’s agenda.
- The Royal Colleges should develop guidance on appropriate use of opioids and amphetamines for all sectors, to ensure best practice across all areas.
- The Department of Health should revisit the requisition regulations and guidance to ensure that they capture and identify the purchase of controlled drugs by all individual doctors and healthcare professionals, in line with the original policy intent.

I am writing to you in relation to the first of these and the important role Accountable Officers (AOs) have in the delivery of their duties to support the safe management of controlled drugs. I fully appreciate we are in challenging times, but I would ask for your help in ensuring that the good gains that have been made over the last three years in this programme continue during the

forthcoming period of change. It is vital, if we are to ensure patient safety and maintain public confidence, that this work remains high on your organisation's agenda.

Colleagues here at the Department will be discussing further with the CQC what changes may be appropriate in respect of their third recommendation. If you have further questions or need further information please do not hesitate to get in touch with Robert Allan at the Department of Health on 0113 254 6312 or by emailing him at [Robert.allan@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.allan@dh.gsi.gov.uk) .

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. W. Ridge', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Dr Keith Ridge  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer (England)