

## Medicines Optimisation

### Best Practice Guidance for Care Homes – *Bulletin 3*

## Safe Storage of Controlled Drugs in Care Homes

### General Information

- Controlled Drugs are classified into five schedules.
- The schedule of a controlled drug determines the specific storage requirements

### Schedule 1 (one)

- Rarely used as medicine – not covered by this guidance

### Schedule 2 (two) and 3 (three)

- Schedule 2 controlled drugs includes opiates and Schedule 3 include minor stimulants and hypnotics.

Commonly used items in these categories:

Schedule 2 (two)	Schedule 3 (three)
Diamorphine	Tramadol *
Morphine (e.g., Zomorph, MST)	Temazepam
Pethidine	Midazolam*
Oxycodone (e.g., Longtec, Shortec, OxyNorm, OxyContin)	Buprenorphine (e.g., Butrans, Butec, Reletrans)
Fentanyl (e.g., Fencino, Matrifen, Durogesic D Trans)	Pregabalin (e.g., Alzain, Lyrica) *
Methadone	Phenobarbitol*
Alfentanil (e.g., Rapifen)	Gabapentin*

\*See below for exemptions to storage requirements

### Schedule 4 (four)

- Part I – contains most of the benzodiazepines (such as diazepam) and the “Z” drugs (zopiclone, zolpidem, zalepon)
- Part II – contains most of the anabolic/androgenic steroids and growth hormones

### Schedule 5 (five)

- Schedule 5 contains preparations of certain controlled drugs (such as codeine, pholcodine and morphine) that are exempt from full control when present in products of specifically low strengths.

### Safe Custody Requirements

- The concept of safe custody requires care homes to keep relevant controlled drugs in a “locked cabinet or safe, locked with a key. The cabinet should be made of metal and fixed to the wall or floor.
- The controlled drugs that **MUST** be kept under safe custody are:
  - Schedule 1 drugs (ALL)
  - Schedule 2 drugs (ALL)
  - Schedule 3 drugs requiring safe custody include temazepam and buprenorphine (see below for exemptions .....

### Safe Custody Exemptions

- Exemptions of items in schedule 3 which do not require safe custody include: phenobarbital, midazolam buccal, tramadol, pregabalin, gabapentin and pentazocine.
- Other exemptions also include any items in schedule 4 & 5 (e.g., Oramorph 10mg/ 5ml).
- You may wish to keep other controlled drugs (i.e., those exempted from requiring safe custody) in the controlled drugs cabinet if there is enough space as good practice. Some homes also choose to store hypnotics such as zopiclone in the CD cabinet.

**This can act as a reminder that these are controlled drugs but please balance this against the need to access certain exempt items (i.e., Midazolam buccal) in an emergency**

#### References

1. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society Medicines, Ethics and Practice 2013 (members access only)
2. NMC Standards for Medicines Management [Standards for medicines management new cover 2010 \(gosh.nhs.uk\)](https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/gosh/standards-for-medicines-management-new-cover-2010)  
NICE guideline (NG46) Controlled drugs:safe use and management April 2016 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG46>
3. The misuse of drugs (safe custody) Regulations 1973  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1973/798/made#:~:text=These%20Regulations%2C%20with%20effect%20from,or%20in%20a%20locked%20receptacle.>

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