

Spotting a forged or fraudulent prescription (Issued for Dorset, Hampshire & Isle of Wight).

1) WHAT IS A FORGED OR FRAUDULENT PRESCRIPTION?

A forged or fraudulent prescription can be a genuine prescriptions form which:

- has been stolen
- has been altered by someone other than an authorised prescriber (for example to increase the quantity or dose, or add additional items)
- is not signed by an authorised prescriber

or it could be a fake prescription form.



WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

2) COLOUR OF THE PRESCRIPTION FORM

The colours of legitimate forms are deliberately hard to copy, so a fake one tends to stand out.

3) SERIAL NUMBERS

All prescription forms have serial numbers. An alert may have already been issued so look out for prescriptions with specified numbers.

4) DATE PRESCRIPTION ISSUED

Remember the time intervals within which prescriptions must be presented for dispensing. There may be a genuine reason for having an old but still valid prescription, query this with the patient to establish if this seems plausible.

5) ADDRESS OF PRESCRIBER

You know the surgeries from which you normally get prescriptions. Some areas may see more out of town prescribers e.g. holiday areas. However; bear in mind that the prescription may have been stolen.

6) ALTERATIONS OR ADDITIONS

Alterations that have been seen include:

- overwriting both printed and handwritten items on prescriptions
- overwriting the prescriber's signature
- use of amateur type-setting kits to print onto stolen prescriptions

Does the handwriting match hand-written scripts from that prescriber that you've seen previously?
Is the spacing sensible? Are the drug names spelt correctly and are the quantities and directions logical?

7) SIGNATURE

You tend to know the signatures of the prescribers local to the pharmacy. If the signature is not known and you are concerned, do you have another example of it in the current month's prescriptions? There has been a case where an amendment was made to a prescription and the person who did it then initialled the amendment to make it look like the GP had made the change.

Turn over for what to do if you are presented with a forged or fraudulent prescription

What to do if you are presented with a forged or fraudulent prescription

**Consider your safety and that of your staff and customers;
If threatened, or if you believe that the person may become violent, then telephone the police as soon as you can on 999.**

1) DO NOT DISPENSE

You should not dispense the medication but keep the prescription – be careful not to give the person a chance to snatch it back! If you are concerned that the script may be snatched back, endorse 'presented at xxx pharmacy on xx/xx/xx' at the top of the prescription.

2) STALL FOR TIME

Inform the patient that you can't dispense the prescription immediately, and ask them to either wait or return later (if possible, ask them to say when they will return). Delaying tactics to try include a lack of stock, lunchtime closure, backlog of work or you need to speak to the prescriber.

3) CHECK WITH THE PRESCRIBER

Telephone the prescriber to confirm whether the prescription has been altered or forged. Use a published telephone number rather than any number given on the suspect prescription unless you are sure it is correct.

4) TELL THE POLICE

If the person who presented the prescription is waiting in the pharmacy, or is expected to return shortly, call the police on **999**, explain the situation and ask them to attend immediately. If it is not known when the person may return, or they are to return another day, telephone the police on **101** and report the crime. In either case, obtain a crime reference number from the police.

5) GET BACK-UP

If your pharmacy is part of a larger store which has security staff, arrange for a member of security staff to come to the pharmacy (straight away, if the person is waiting, or in advance of the time that the person is expected to return).

6) IF THE PATIENT COMES BACK LATER

If the patient returns later, if possible ask them to wait (using the delaying tactics above) and contact the police on **999** as above. If that is not possible, say you are unable to dispense the prescription because you believe it may not be genuine / may have been altered, and that the police have been informed. If nothing else, this will hopefully deter them from attempting to use any other stolen prescriptions they may have.

7) TELL NHS ENGLAND

Email alerts.scwcsu@nhs.net attaching your completed draft of the alert template (if you have this) or alternatively provide details of the prescription, the prescriber and the prescription number. This is so that the origin of the prescription can be traced, and NHS England can circulate an alert in case other stolen prescriptions are presented to other pharmacies. If you need non-urgent advice, call NHS England; **for Hampshire & Isle of Wight** 0113 825 9810 (email england.wessexpharmacy@nhs.net), **for Dorset** call 0113 824 8129 or 0113 825 1745. If the medication is a Controlled Drug you should also notify the Controlled Drug Accountable Officer, **for Hampshire & the Isle of Wight** email: england.southeastdao@nhs.net; or **for Dorset** england.southwestcontrolleddrugs@nhs.net

8) TELL NHS COUNTER FRAUD AUTHORITY

Report the Incident to the NHS Counter Fraud Authority; the two easy ways to report fraud to the NHSCFA is through the NHS Fraud and Corruption Reporting Line **0800 028 4060** or online at: <https://cfa.nhs.uk/reportfraud> .

9) TELL THE LOCAL COUNTER FRAUD SPECIALIST (LCFS)

After telling the police, tell the CCG LCFS the crime reference number and the name, number & station of the police officer handling the case. LCFS Contact details **for Hampshire & Isle of Wight** are; <https://www.northhampshireccg.nhs.uk/about-us/fraud-security-management/fraud-information/> or **for Dorset** see ttaa (<https://www.ttaa.co.uk/>); Tel: 01202 891110, or **see Dorset at** <https://www.ttaa.co.uk/contact-us-2/>

10) KEEP A RECORD

Record all the details, including a description of the person, and make a note of any telephone conversations. If there is any CCTV footage of the person presenting the prescription or when they returned to the pharmacy later, retain and quarantine this footage so it can be provided to the Police or the LCFS at a later stage. If the police or the LCFS wish to take the original prescription as evidence, retain a copy in the pharmacy.

11) CLAIM THE REWARD

A pharmacy which identifies a forged prescription can claim a Reward Payment. Pharmacists in England who are eligible to claim a reward under the scheme should contact: NHS Counter Fraud Authority, Skipton House, 80 London Road, London, SE1 6LH, **Telephone:** [0207 895 4500](tel:02078954500) / **Email:** servicedesk@nhsca.gsi.gov.uk / **Website:** <https://cfa.nhs.uk/home>