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Dear Colleague

Guidance on Storage for Medicines (including Controlled Drugs) in Clinical Areas

Summary

This letter refers to new Health Building Note [Medicines storage in clinical areas \(HBN 14-02\)](#) for NHSScotland use. This followed the recently updated guidance published in England regarding storage facilities for medicines, including controlled drugs, on hospital in-patient wards. The guidance relates to **new build and refurbishment work only** but is being circulated more widely as it also serves as a reminder on the arrangements which should be in place for the safe storage of medicines, including controlled drugs.

Background

The scope of the guidance is to highlight relevant legislative standards, best practice and patient safety recommendations that apply to the safe and secure storage of medicines in clinical areas. The guidance is largely related to acute hospitals but may also be applicable to other healthcare settings for example care homes. Storage requirements for medicines will differ depending on local risk assessments, ward/area type and medicines usage profile.

The Director of Pharmacy of each individual Health Board has responsibility for policies around safe storage of medicines. The nurse in charge of wards is accountable for the safe custody of medicines at operational ward level. Health Facilities Scotland staff should therefore consult with relevant staff when new build or refurbishment work is planned.

As the guidance highlights current recognised standards, then in considering the content, Health Boards will wish to ensure that appropriate risk assessments are carried out by charge nurses or Department managers to identify where non compliance with the standards represents an unacceptable level of risk.

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Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards
and Special Health Boards
Health Facilities Scotland
National Services Scotland
(Common Services Agency)

For information

Medical Directors, NHS Boards
and Special Health Boards
Directors of Pharmacy, NHS Boards
and Special Health Boards
Directors of Nursing, NHS Boards
and Special Health Boards
Directors of Facilities, NHS Boards
and Special Health Boards
ARHAI, National Services Scotland
(Common Services Agency)

Enquiries to:

Medicines Policy Team

Tel: 0300 244 4000

E-mail: medicines.policy@gov.scot

Technical enquiries to:

Health Facilities Scotland

E-mail: NSS.hfsenquiries@nhs.scot

Any staff wishing further advice on the safe storage of medicines should contact their Health Board Director of Pharmacy. Advice specifically concerning storage facilities for controlled drugs can be obtained from the Health Board Controlled Drug Accountable Officer.

The new HBN 14-02 guidance is published by NHS Health Facilities Scotland and can be found online at:
www.nss.nhs.scot/publications/medicines-storage-in-clinical-areas-hbn-14-02/

As detailed in the cover page, a number of updates have been made to the NHS England document to reflect the position in Scotland.

Action

As this guidance is relevant for NHS Scotland, Health Boards are asked to:

- ensure that relevant staff are made aware of the guidance as appropriate; and
- ensure that relevant staff take forward any necessary actions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alison Strath', is positioned above the typed name.

**Professor Alison Strath FRPharmS
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer**

