

# Controlled drugs and drug dependence

## Regulations and classification

The Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971 as amended prohibits certain activities in relation to 'Controlled Drugs', in particular their manufacture, supply, and possession (except where permitted by the 2001 Regulations or under licence from the Secretary of State). The penalties applicable to offences involving the different drugs are graded broadly according to the *harmfulness attributable to a drug when it is misused* and for this purpose the drugs are defined in the following three classes:

- **Class A** includes: alfentanil p. 1413, cocaine, diamorphine hydrochloride p. 477 (heroin), dipipanone hydrochloride, fentanyl p. 479, lysergide (LSD), methadone hydrochloride p. 524, 3, 4-methylenedioxyamfetamine (MDMA, 'ecstasy'), morphine p. 484, opium, oxycodone hydrochloride p. 487, pethidine hydrochloride p. 490, phencyclidine, remifentanyl p. 1414, and class B substances when prepared for injection.
- **Class B** includes: oral amfetamines, barbiturates, cannabis, *Sativex*<sup>®</sup>, codeine phosphate p. 475, dihydrocodeine tartrate p. 477, ethylmorphine, glutethimide, ketamine p. 1415, nabilone p. 450, pentazocine, phenmetrazine, and pholcodine p. 312.
- **Class C** includes: certain drugs related to the amfetamines such as benzfetamine and chlorphentermine, buprenorphine p. 468, mazindol, meprobamate, pemoline, pipradrol, most benzodiazepines, tramadol hydrochloride p. 491, zaleplon, zolpidem tartrate, zopiclone, androgenic and anabolic steroids, clenbuterol, chorionic gonadotrophin (HCG), non-human chorionic gonadotrophin, somatotropin, somatrem, somatropin p. 788, gabapentin p. 331, and pregabalin.

The Misuse of Drugs (Safe Custody) Regulations 1973 as amended details the storage and safe custody requirements for Controlled Drugs.

The Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (and subsequent amendments) defines the classes of person who are authorised to supply and possess Controlled Drugs while acting in their professional capacities and lays down the conditions under which these activities may be carried out. In the 2001 regulations, drugs are divided into five Schedules, each specifying the requirements governing such activities as import, export, production, supply, possession, prescribing, and record keeping which apply to them.

- **Schedule 1** includes drugs not used medicinally such as hallucinogenic drugs (e.g. LSD), ecstasy-type substances, raw opium, and cannabis. A Home Office licence is generally required for their production, possession, or supply. A Controlled Drug register must be used to record details of any Schedule 1 Controlled Drugs received or supplied by a pharmacy.
- **Schedule 2** includes opiates (e.g. diamorphine hydrochloride p. 477 (heroin), morphine p. 484, methadone hydrochloride p. 524, oxycodone hydrochloride p. 487, pethidine hydrochloride p. 490), major stimulants (e.g. amfetamines), quinalbarbitone (secobarbital), cocaine, ketamine p. 1415, and cannabis-based products for medicinal use in humans. Schedule 2 Controlled Drugs are subject to the full Controlled Drug requirements relating to prescriptions, safe custody (except for quinalbarbitone (secobarbital) and some liquid preparations), and the need to keep a Controlled Drug register, (unless exempted in Schedule 5). Possession, supply and procurement is authorised for pharmacists and other classes of persons named in the 2001 Regulations.

- **Schedule 3** includes the barbiturates (except secobarbital, now Schedule 2), buprenorphine p. 468, gabapentin p. 331, mazindol, meprobamate, midazolam p. 356, pentazocine, phentermine, pregabalin, temazepam p. 509, and tramadol hydrochloride p. 491. They are subject to the special prescription requirements. Safe custody requirements do apply, except for any 5,5 disubstituted barbituric acid (e.g. phenobarbital), gabapentin p. 331, mazindol, meprobamate, midazolam p. 356, pentazocine, phentermine, pregabalin, tramadol hydrochloride p. 491, or any stereoisomeric form or salts of the above. Records in registers do not need to be kept (although there are requirements for the retention of invoices for 2 years).
- **Schedule 4** includes in Part I drugs that are subject to minimal control, such as benzodiazepines (except temazepam p. 509 and midazolam p. 356, which are in Schedule 3), non-benzodiazepine hypnotics (zaleplon, zolpidem tartrate, and zopiclone) and *Sativex*<sup>®</sup>. Part II includes androgenic and anabolic steroids, clenbuterol, chorionic gonadotrophin (HCG), non-human chorionic gonadotrophin, somatotropin, somatrem, and somatropin p. 788. Controlled drug prescription requirements do not apply and Schedule 4 Controlled Drugs are not subject to safe custody requirements. Records in registers do not need to be kept (except in the case of *Sativex*<sup>®</sup>).
- **Schedule 5** includes preparations of certain Controlled Drugs (such as codeine, pholcodine p. 312 or morphine p. 484) which due to their low strength, are exempt from virtually all Controlled Drug requirements other than retention of invoices for two years.

Since the Responsible Pharmacist Regulations were published in 2008, standing operation procedures for the management of Controlled Drugs, are required in registered pharmacies.

The Health Act 2006 introduced the concept of the 'accountable officer' with responsibility for the management of Controlled Drugs and related governance issues in their organisation. Most recently, in 2013 The Controlled Drugs (Supervision of Management and Use) Regulations were published to ensure good governance concerning the safe management and use of Controlled Drugs in England and Scotland.

## Prescriptions

Preparations in Schedules 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (and subsequent amendments) are identified throughout the BNF and BNF *for children* using the following symbols:

CD1	for preparations in Schedule 1
CD2	for preparations in Schedule 2
CD3	for preparations in Schedule 3
CD4-1	for preparations in Schedule 4 (Part I)
CD4-2	for preparations in Schedule 4 (Part II)
CD5	for preparations in Schedule 5

The principal legal requirements relating to medical prescriptions are listed below (see also Department of Health Guidance at [www.gov.uk/dh](http://www.gov.uk/dh)).

**Prescription requirements** Prescriptions for Controlled Drugs that are subject to prescription requirements (all preparations in Schedules 2 and 3) must be indelible, must be *signed* by the prescriber, include the *date* on which they were signed, and specify the prescriber's *address* (must be