



**Royal  
Pharmaceutical  
Society**  
of Great Britain

## **Law and Ethics Bulletin**

### **New powers for Accountable Officers and Operating Department Practitioners following changes to Controlled Drugs legislation**

Accountable Officers (AOs) are now able to authorise a person or a class of persons to witness the destruction of controlled drugs (CDs). This allows AOs to ensure that there are sufficient people authorised to witness the destruction of CDs in the area they are responsible for. This will also reduce the potential for a build up of out of date or surplus CDs waiting to be destroyed. However, AOs are not authorised to personally witness the destruction of CDs, as they must be completely independent from the day to day management of CDs.

Operating department practitioners (ODPs) are healthcare professionals registered with the Health Professions Council. ODPs are now able to possess and supply Schedule 2-5 CDs for the purpose of administering to a patient in certain circumstances. These CDs can only be supplied to them by the person responsible for the dispensing and supply of medicines at the hospital in which they are practising. ODPs can supply CDs for administration to a patient in a ward, theatre or other department in accordance with the directions of a doctor, dentist, supplementary prescriber (acting in accordance with the terms of a clinical management plan) or nurse independent prescriber. The directions given by a nurse independent prescriber relate only to the limited list of CDs which they may prescribe and are subject to restrictions on the purpose for which that drug may be prescribed. This new authority does not enable ODPs to requisition CDs.

These amendments to the authority of AOs and ODPs in relation to CDs came into force on 16 August 2007.