



Changes to repeat prescription ordering services throughout the Humber area

The purpose of this document is to outline the change to be implemented to repeat prescription ordering services in the Humber area from the 1st of April 2020.

This is a joint approach undertaken by North of England Commissioning Support including the following Clinical Commissioning Groups:

- East Riding of Yorkshire
- Hull
- North Lincolnshire
- North East Lincolnshire

Background

Across Humber Coast and Vale health and care partnership a great deal of money is spent every year on repeat prescriptions, accounting for up to 80% of prescribing costs, up to £182m of prescribing resources, presenting an area that can be improved. By focusing on changing the repeat prescribing order systems, we estimate we can deliver significant benefits for the local health economy, in particular potential avoidable waste savings of around £2.5m per year.

The management of repeat prescriptions is available for patients in a number of different ways within general practices including through third parties such as dispensing contractors, dispensing appliance contractors or online providers. However, this method of repeat prescription ordering through a third party presents challenges to the local NHS including inefficiencies, inappropriate prescribing, patient safety and wastage.

The four Humber Clinical Commissioning Groups agreed to implement a change to the repeat prescription ordering system. This change, due to be applied on the 1st of April 2020, over a two month period, will see GP Practices, across the Humber area, receiving repeat prescription requests directly from patients, carers or a nominated representative, negating the need for patients to go through a third party and helping to ensure they only order what they need. Support is available for patients who may still require assistance in ordering their repeat medication.

What is repeat prescribing?

Repeat prescription ordering services can be defined as a service to patients that has been agreed between the dispensing contractor and an individual patient where the dispensing contractor is empowered by the patient to order and collect their repeat prescription.

Repeat prescribing is carried out in a number of ways within general practices:

- Using a traditional system in-line with practice policy, this involves the patient ordering their prescriptions in person, by telephone, using digital solutions or completing a repeat slip, which accompanies their prescription.
- Using the nationally contracted Repeat Dispensing (RD) process which can be a paper based service or electronic following the implementation of the electronic prescribing service (EPS). This allows the patient to obtain repeated supplies of their medication or appliances without the need for the prescriber to sign authorised repeat prescriptions each time. This adds contractual levers and safeguards to the ordering and supply of repeat medication for NHS England contract monitoring processes.
- By managed repeat prescription ordering services (MRPOS) offered by community pharmacies. There is no contractual lever to ensure this is managed effectively.
- By services offered by other contractors such as dispensing appliance contractors (DACs) and 'Hospital to Home' enteral nutrition services. Most practices currently use a combination of all of the above methods.

What is changing?

From Wednesday the 1st of April 2020, dispensing contractors will no longer offer a repeat prescription ordering service for patients. This will only affect those patients whose medicines are ordered on their behalf. These patients will have to order their repeat prescriptions from their General Practice. To help patients adapt to this change there will be a phased implementation from the 1st of April to 1st June 2020. Any patients ordering from their pharmacy during this period will still receive support, with the pharmacy explaining that their next order will have to be with their General Practice.

There are a number of ways in which patients can order their repeat prescription:

- Online via a patient's GP Practice website
- Through the new NHS App
- In person, at the patient's GP Practice
- In some practices (not all) via the telephone or email

What is not changing?

- Pharmacies that collect prescriptions from GP surgeries will continue to do so.
- Pharmacies that deliver medications and other items to patients' doors will still do so.
- Patient's collecting their medicine from their local pharmacy can continue with these arrangements.

How will vulnerable people receive support?

General Practices and dispensing contractors will work together to identify those patients who may need additional assistance ensuring they continue to receive support from their pharmacy when ordering repeat prescriptions. GPs and dispensing contractors will use the following criteria when identifying those patients in need of support.

- Patients who cannot order online, or do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf.
- Patients who are housebound and do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf.
- Patients using Monitored Dosing Systems and do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf.

- Patients with a learning disability and do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf.
- Patients who have Dementia and do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf.
- Patients with severe mental health issues and do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf.
- Patients who are end of life and do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf.
- Patients who are tube/PEG fed and do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf.

This is not an exhaustive list and other patients identified by practice staff as needing additional support in managing their medication can be added to the list.

Why is the change necessary?

The new way of working is safer and more efficient with the change helping to address safety issues. Under the current system, with third party suppliers ordering medicines on patients' behalf, many patients find they build up a stock of unused medicines that have to be stored safely and used within a certain date. The new system allows patients to take control of their own medicines, and health and only order what they require, negating the need to stockpile medicines over a period of time.

Patients' GPs are able to monitor and control the medicines their patients do and do not use, better than the patient's pharmacist can. This will help when GPs discuss and choose the right medicines for patients during their medication review. Patients will also have a better understanding and say regarding the medicines prescribed and why they are taking them.

NHS resources are precious and the change will help to reduce medicines waste (stocks of unused medicine). We estimate the Humber Coast and Vale health and care partnership can save around £2.5m each year, money that could be spent on improving local health and care services for the local population.

There will be an initial increase in workload for GP practices, however over time this will decrease due to less prescription request queries from pharmacies. The new system also provides GPs with an improved audit trail for repeat prescribing.

When will the change happen?

The change will come into effect on Wednesday the 1st of April 2020, over a two-month period. GP practices and pharmacies will receive leaflets and posters early February allowing them to start informing patients on an individual basis before change take place.