**GENERAL ADVICE**

**SYSTEM SUPPLIER ISSUES**

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| Q | Patients are being sent to the Pharmacy to collect their prescriptions having seen the GP. When arriving at the Pharmacy, the prescription has still not downloaded.  |
| A | The main reason for this is different Pharmacy systems has different speeds. The Pharmacy must query with their IT supplier helpdesk and must get a Reference number. If not resolved refer to HSCIC with the helpdesk number. |
| Q | The Pharmacy PMR does not display addresses or date of birth of patients with similar first and last names unless you open the prescription as well.  |
| A | Raise as a development issue with PMR suppliers.  |
| Q | Patients who have been to their GP have their prescription automatically sent to the pharmacy. However in some cases some prescriptions are taking a long time to be sent to the pharmacy, this is despite refreshing the system constantly to get the prescription.  |
| A | Report delays to PMR supplier and make sure staff knows the correct refresh button to press. Also work with GPs to manage expectations, pharmacy will need time to download and prepare. |
| Q | The system regularly crashes and we have to restart from scratch |
| A | Raise with PMR supplier  |
| Q | The EPS system erases records for patients whose records are set up for care homes or dosette boxes. |
| A | Raise with PMR supplier to find a better way to store specific patient information |
| Q | Problems with the internet or software problems, and Connection problems to spine stops whole dispensing process, therefore unable to download prescriptions preventing dispensing.  |
| A | Raise with PMR supplier |
| Q | The Pharmacy experiences occasional power outages.  |
| A | Raise with PMR supplier or raise with your telecoms supplier  |
| Q | Unable to claim for several weeks batch prescriptions. Unable to download next batch as previous batch is stuck and IT support is still working on this issue |
| A | Raise with PMR supplier |
| Q | N3 internet is provided by certain software providers via a BT line, GP's have a same day response on non-functional internet but Pharmacy has anything between an 8 working hour response up to several days. Are there any suggestions that the software providers are going to provide a backup system (n3 mobile broad band solution) |
| A | You need to speak to your phone supplier to see if better options are available. |
| Q | Can I rectify switched prescriptions on the EPS system? |
| A | Currently this function is not available; however please check patients’ nominations on a regular basis for exemption status. Following the move to Spine 2 from August 2014 onwards, system suppliers have flexibility to allow prescriptions to be amended even after submission before NHSBSA ‘lock’ the prescription to begin the pricing process |
| Q | Can prescriptions be trapped in the spine? |
| A | This can sometimes occur, you should check every month that all prescriptions have been pulled down and accounted for. |
| Q | How can I track where prescriptions are? |
| A | Where appropriate to (e.g. there is patient consent or implied consent because they are trying to obtain items at your pharmacy). Please use the HSCIC prescription tracker  <https://nww.spine2.ncrs.nhs.uk/prescriptionsadmin/>Prescription tracker guide <http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/eps/library/presctrackerguid.pdf> |

**SMARTCARD ISSUES**

**For more information please visit**

<http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/eps/dispensing/getstarted/smartcards>

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| Q  | What if the GP is not using a smartcard?  |
| A  | GPs, Practice staff and Pharmacy staff will all need to use their smartcards to ensure that the system works. A paper prescription will be produced – and the benefits of EPS Release 2 will not be realised.  |
| Q  | Do locums need a smartcard?  |
| A  | Yes, all locums will need to be using smartcards to use EPSR2.  |
| Q  | What happens if a locum pharmacist loses his/her smart card?  |
| A  | The pharmacy should have a business continuity plan in place. The locum pharmacist needs to contact the IT help desk to have another card issued  |
| Q | How can I renew my smartcard online? |
| A | You can renew your smartcard online via your PMR system within the Smartcard Service Portal. Please see link below. Please note that you must visit your RA Agent once every six years to renew your smartcard.<http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/eps/library/renewcert.pdf> |
| Q | Where can I can get my smartcard?  |
| A  | Details on the next page  |

**RA Agent contacts across London**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AT** | **Boroughs** | **Contacts** | **AT** | **Boroughs** | **Contacts** | **AT** | **Boroughs** | **Contacts** |
| **North Central & East London**  | Barking & Dagenham | 020 8430 7007 – servicedesk@nelft@nhs.uk | **North West London**  | Brent | 02089661013 & 02089661040 -r.admin@nhs.net | **South London** | Bexley | 0208 298 6166 - it@bexley.nhs.uk |
| Barnet | 020 3688 1414 – gpservicedesk@nelcsu.nhs.uk | Ealing | 0208 962 4903 -nwlcsu.RegistrationAuthority@nhs.net | Bromley | 0208 315 8702 it.support@bromleyhealthcare-cic.nhs.uk |
| Kingston | Your Healthcare  HR Dept0208 339 8168/8169/8184Email: KINCCG.yhrecruitment@nhs.nethttp://www.yourhealthcare.org/ |
| Camden | 020 3688 1881- GPIT@camdenccg.nhs.uk | Hammersmith & Fulham | 0208 962 6591 -Registration.authority@nwlcsu.nhs.uk | Croydon |  020 3049 6000 - slcsu.ictservicedesk@nhs.net |
| City & Hackney | 020 3688 1414 – gpservicedesk@nelcsu.nhs.uk | Harrow | 02089661013 & 02089661040 -r.admin@nhs.net  | Greenwich |
| Enfield | 020 3688 1414 – gpservicedesk@nelcsu.nhs.uk | Hillingdon | Merton |
| Haringey | Hounslow | 020 8630 1159emanoto@nhs.net   | Lambeth |
| Havering | 020 8430 7007 – servicedesk@nelft@nhs.uk | Kensington & Chelsea | 0208 962 6591Registration.authority@nwlcsu.nhs.uk | Lewisham |
| Islington | 020 3688 1414 – gpservicedesk@nelcsu.nhs.uk | Westminster | Southwark |
| Newham |  |  | Sutton |
| Redbridge | 020 8430 7007 – servicedesk@nelft@nhs.uk | Richmond  |
| Tower Hamlets | 020 3688 1414 – gpservicedesk@nelcsu.nhs.uk | Wandsworth |
| Waltham Forest | 020 8430 7007 – servicedesk@nelft@nhs.uk |

**NOMINATIONS**

There is best practice guidance about nominations from the HSCIC website. The EPS service should be explained to patients, and this will determine whether it will suit their lifestyle. Please see link below:-

<http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/eps/library/nomination.pdf>

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| Q  | Where does nomination take place?  |
| A  | Nomination can take in a GP Practice, Community Pharmacy and Dispensing Appliance Contractor at a patients request  |
| Q  | Can a patient nominate more than one pharmacy?  |
| A  | Patients can nominate up to one community pharmacy and one dispensing appliance contractor at any one time.  |
| Q  | A lot of patients go from one pharmacy to another if they cannot obtain all of their medicines. What is the process for this?  |
| A  | Patients have the right to change their pharmacy nomination. A prescription can be returned to the spine and a token can be printed for the patient to obtain their medication from another pharmacy if required.  |
| Q  | Can you start collecting nominations on paper?  |
| A  | Yes you can start collecting once you have put in your order for your systems to be upgraded. Where nomination requests have been collected more than 6 weeks in advance, dispensers should re-confirm with patients prior to going live with the EPS in case they had more recently provided consent for an alternative dispenser. |
| Q  | Are the nomination forms available?  |
| A  | Example Nomination forms are available on the HSCIC website<http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/eps/library> |
| Q  | Do GPs need to collect nominations?  |
| A  | GPs can collect and record nominations if required.  |
| Q  | During the nomination process, can carers still collect scripts?  |
| A  | Yes, the process has not changed. Carers or patient representatives can collect scripts.  |
| Q  | If a patient lives in one part of London and has nominated a pharmacy close to where they work, can the nomination be changed if they want to collect the prescription at a pharmacy close to where they live? |
| A  | Yes, the nomination can be overridden by the GP to produce a “paper” prescription that they can obtain anywhere in the UK as they do now  |
| Q | If a patient has been incorrectly nominated without appropriate advice or consent, who can they complain to? |
| A | The patient may raise a complaint to NHS England. The patient MUST provide consent for their date of birth and NHS number to be provided. Details for NHS England Complaint Team could can be found at <http://www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/complaint/>**NHS England**PO Box 16738RedditchB97 9PT**By email to:** england.contactus@nhs.net **By telephone: 0300 311 22 33** (Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, excluding English Bank Holidays) |

**GP –COMMUNITY PHARMACY INTERFACE ISSUES**

These operational issues should be part of on-going joint meetings between GPs and Pharmacies as part of business process change. Please see link below explaining the benefits of EPS to GP practices:-

<http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/eps/library/benefitsgp.pdf>

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| Q | Prescriptions are being sent partly by EPS and partly on paper prescriptions.  |
| A | Split Prescriptions agree with practice how this will be done. |
| Q | EPS2 repeat dispensing scripts issued whilst paper-based version still being used.  |
| A | Raise with prescriber  |
| Q  | GP practice sometimes sends EPS prescriptions or on paper and occasionally does it on a normal prescription, some items come on first prescription but next prescription items get deleted. |
|  | Advise practice to raise with local EPS lead to find out why. Tell GP practice to always use smartcards. |
| Q | Some GP surgeries not processing repeat request electronically. |
| A  | Understand the reason for this e.g. Controlled drug, unmapped drugs etc. Encourage local engagement between local GP and pharmacy around potential issues. Should be discussed as part of business process change |
| Q | GP practice refusing to process weekly /dosette scripts electronically.  |
| A | This is a local matter and process issue; agree locally there are ways to do in EPS. Please ensure weekly prescriptions have been jointly agreed  |
| Q | How can GP practices add electronic notes to a patient on EPS, as they do on a paper prescriptions i.e. writing notes on the Left hand side of the prescription or adding a post it note.  |
|  | GP practices can add electronic messages , this should be discussed at joint meetings  |
| Q | Doctors are not aware of the fact that e-scripts cannot be amended and often they will walk to the dispensary and amend a dose on a e-script after we have rung through a query.  |
| A | Doctors need to be made aware of this. E-scripts need to be cancelled and replaced. |

**Guidance on Prescription Direction**

**Prescription direction -** ‘Prescription direction’ occurs where a patient is being directed by their GP practice to a certain pharmacy to have their prescription dispensed. Patients have a free choice between any community pharmacy and in some cases, a GP dispensary. Actions by practices seeking to influence a patient’s choice of pharmacy can undermine relationships with patients, as well as damaging trust and cooperation between healthcare professionals. Financial arrangements between community pharmacies and GP practices should be transparent.

**The British Medical Association, the Pharmaceutical Service Negotiating Committee and Pharmacy Voice** agree that guidelines to ensure proper prescription practices should be followed. Providing advice that can be seen as prescription direction is against good practice. Please see the link below for more guidance

<http://psnc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/BMA_PSNC_PV_prescription_direction_guidance_October_13.pdf>

**SYSTEM ISSUES AND SUPPORT**

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| Q  | If an individual GP needs support how do they get it?  |
| A  | The CCG / CSU will arrange for trainers to train GP staff.  |
| Q  | If there are system problems and the electronic prescription cannot be accessed at the community pharmacy, how would a patient receive their medication?  |
| Q  | What is the process if the EPSR2 is down?  |
| A  | All sites should have a business continuity policy that is extended to cover EPS R2. Some guidance on what goes into this can be found on the HSCIC website. Pharmacies and local GPS should work together to determine the process if EPS fails. For more information please see references below.<http://psnc.org.uk/dispensing-supply/eps/contingency-arrangements/><http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/eps/library/buscontslides.pdf> |
| A  | The pharmacy business continuity plan (ideally pre-arranged with local GPS) and should outline what is to be done: For example the patient can go back to the GP and request a paper prescription. In an emergency and under certain specific conditions the pharmacist can supply certain POMs to a patient without a prescription if requested by a prescriber or the patient. **For more information, refer to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), or the ‘Emergency Supply’ section of their Medicines, Ethics and Practice (MEP).** |
| Q  | Is there a way of knowing whether a GP practice is EPS compliant?  |
| A  | This information is available on the HSCIC website <http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/eps/stats/deploymap/national> |
| Q  | What is the difference between pharmacist and technician with regard to RA carding?  |
| A  | Pharmacist can nominate while Technician cannot (by default – a role can be added if required)  |
| Q  | When can a pharmacy send EPSR2 prescriptions to the BSA?  |
| A  | A claim can be sent any time after the prescription has been dispensed (or marked as not dispensed as required), ensure that claims are sent in a timely way, and that none pass the 6 month |
| Q  | What does a pharmacy have to do to issue owings on EPSR2?  |
| A  | Download the prescription, dispensed part of it, produce owing slip, attach it to the token, give owing slip to patient and complete dispensing it when the item is available. The same as now.  |
| Q  | Can a pharmacy cancel a prescription?  |
| A  | No a pharmacy cannot cancel a prescription.  |
| Q  | How many times a GP can put the code (pin number) on the EPSR2 system?  |
| A  | Only once  |
| Q | Is there an online way of changing patient exemption status to avoid switched prescriptions on EPS? |
| A | There will be a ‘Claim Amend’ function to amend on line a patient exemption status. This has not been deployed yet and is in development.Until this is deployed all community pharmacies should continually check patient’s exemption status and inform prescribers accordingly. Make a note a patient’s exemption status in the PMR making note of certificate expiry dates.  |
| Q | Is there a guide to prescription reimbursement via EPS  |
| A | There is a reimbursement guide <http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/eps/library/0712.pdf> |

**SYSTEM ISSUES AND SUPPORT (cont.)**

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| Q | Prescriptions becoming 'lost' within the spine/ Scripts not arriving / Repeat Prescriptions are not arriving by EPS. How can prescriptions be tracked on line?  |
|  | Raise with supplier – use EPS tracker <https://epstracker.cfh.nhs.uk/> - new version coming with Spine 2 (search by NHS number) |
| Q | The pharmacy receives but cannot process an electronic prescription sent by a surgery, the surgery is often reluctant to re-send a prescription believing it will be double dispensed/charged. |
| A | Ask practice to cancel prescription and re-send Pharmacy raise a call to supplier to resolve. |
| Q | How do we claim when just one item collected,  |
| A | Claim when all prescription items complete, or mark item not dispensed as “not dispensed”. |
| Q | When prescription sent electronically and is printed a second page prints out and it is a waste of a token paper and ink. |
| A | Systems now have the option to not print the right hand side if not required.  |

**NHS Net Email (Pharmaceutical Journal 29th July 2014)**

The roll out of NHS mail to a wider range of healthcare professionals was part of HSCIC's commitment to improve the secure transfer of patient information across the health service, it said. As the health service began to use more non-NHS organisations to deliver care, commissioners were making a secure way of sharing information a requirement for providers, HSCIC added. NHS mail is already used by more than 600,000 health and social care staff in England and Scotland as a replacement for paper-based processes and to speed up patient care. HSCIC was aware of more than 800 pharmacists, optometrists and dentists who had independently signed up to the service, although it said "many more" had registered through their NHS trust or CCG.

To register for an NHS mail account, pharmacists need to fill out an [online form](http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/nhsmail/using) and email it to their regional NHS mail contact, which can be found on the [HSCIC website](http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/nhsmail/using). Pharmacists who work for a national chain will still need to apply for an account individually.

Please see the HSCIC website details below for information and conditions for registering for NHS Net Email.

[**http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/nhsmail/using**](http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/nhsmail/using)