NHS
Nottingham and
Nottinghamshire

REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS

A GUIDE TO STOPPING THIRD PARTY ORDERING

Third party ordering – a service for patients that has been agreed primarily between the community pharmacy and an individual patient where the community pharmacy is empowered by the patient to order and collect their repeat prescription

Background

The Medicines Optimisation team are sometimes asked by practices for help and support stopping third party ordering. To support our practices, we have developed some tools that practices can use when deciding to stop third party ordering.

This support pack provides generic templates and information that the practice may wish to use when implementing changes to third party ordering. The information provided has kindly been shared by practices who have already implemented these changes within their own practice.

It is good practice to ensure all stakeholders affected by this change have been consulted prior to any final decision being made by the practice. Practices should ensure they have a robust, safe process in place to ensure all patients are informed and supported throughout the process.

Please note: Implementing stopping third party ordering will need to be a practice decision.

CHECKLIST OF ACTIONS FOR GP PRACTICE PRIOR TO GO LIVE DATE

- **Local community pharmacy meeting**: It is best practice to communicate the changes to the local community pharmacies. To ensure a smooth and safe transition for all parties concerned, this should ideally be completed at least 12 to 16 weeks before the go-live date.
- **Patient Participation Groups (PPG)**: Discuss the changes and the reason why the practice has made this decision. Ideally, engagement with your PPG should be early in the process as this will give them the time needed to engage with patients.
- **Communication**: The practice must communicate the change to the patients. They may choose to send an SMS message to all patients who have signed up to receive text messaging. The practice may also consider including a message on the right-hand side of the prescription or sending a letter to the patient.

See examples below of standard statements you may wish to use to inform patients:

Example of SMS message:
We are no longer accepting repeat prescription requests from community pharmacies on behalf of patients. Patients (or their carer, nominated family member/friend) will need to order repeat prescriptions directly from the GP practice. Collection of repeat prescriptions from GP practices by community pharmacies on behalf of patients will not be affected. Some patients may continue to need pharmacy support with repeat prescription ordering. Please contact the practice if this is required.

Example of Right-hand side of prescription message:
We will **no longer** accept repeat prescription requests from community pharmacies on behalf of patients from [add date]. Some patients may continue to need pharmacy support with repeat prescription ordering. Please contact the practice if this is required.

- **Repeat prescription drop box**: Be vigilant to any community pharmacies ignoring this change and who continue to drop off repeat requests.
- **District Nurses (DNs) and other allied health care professionals**: Liaise with the locality lead so that they can inform the entire locality DN team, and they are aware of the changes should they receive any enquiries from patients they visit.
- **Feedback:** Any patient feedback should be dealt with by the practice as per practice policy.

Communication

- Inform all pharmacies, used by your patients, of the change. Ensure this is done in plenty of time before the go-live date.
- Some patients may need to continue having their medications ordered by the pharmacy (as per the agreed exemptions). In this case, the pharmacy should be made aware of which patients need to continue using that service, to avoid inadvertently stopping.

- Inform all patients of the change by letter, SMS message/email or other means agreed within your practice.
- **Practice website:** Add information regarding changes to the repeat ordering process. The practice may want to add a message promoting online ordering via the website or NHS app.

Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD)
To enable patients to still access their repeat medicines easily, where appropriate patients should be offered eRD.

- eRD is suitable for patients who are on a stable repeat medicines regime, with no recent or anticipated changes.

Guidance and further resources to support implementation of eRD can be accessed on the Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Medicines Optimisation website and on TeamNet
nottinghamshiremedicinesmanagement.nhs.uk
Search (clarity.co.uk) - TeamNet

An example of a standard statement to highlight this service is below.

Example of eRD statement:
If you or someone you care for takes the same medication regularly, you may be eligible for the NHS electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD) service. This service eliminates the need for you to order a prescription from your GP every time you require additional medication. Your prescription is automatically sent to your nominated pharmacy every month, and you will pick up your medication from this pharmacy. Speak with a member of your GP practice or your regular pharmacy to find out if this service is appropriate for you.

To help prescribers and practice staff with patient queries around third party repeat prescription ordering changes:

Key messages to relay:

1. This change only affects patients who are on a repeat prescription and who order their prescription in the following way:

    a) Have an agreement with a pharmacy to order/request a prescription on their behalf.
    b) Take their counterfoil prescription to a community pharmacy for them to request prescriptions on their behalf.

Patients who use the GP practice/online ordering/NHS app to request prescriptions are not affected.

2. Patients will receive their first prescription as normal from [ADD DATE] but will need to order the next repeat prescription themselves directly from their GP Practice, online, or via the NHS app, if applicable.
3. This affects the prescription request part of the process only. Therefore, patients can continue to have their prescription collected from the GP practice by their chosen pharmacy and can then collect their medication from the pharmacy, or have it delivered to their home.
4. Drop boxes and over the counter requests within the practice will continue to be available for patients/carers to request repeat medication.
5. Stopping pharmacy requests aims to decrease medication waste and unnecessary prescriptions. It also reduces safety concerns, such as community pharmacies ordering patients' medications from expired counterfoils, resulting in patients receiving discontinued/changed medications. This will provide the patient with greater control over ordering their usual medication.
6. Some patients may continue to need pharmacy support with repeat prescription ordering. GP practices, pharmacies and carers must work together to ensure that vulnerable patients are not at risk due to this change. If a patient is concerned that they or someone they care for is vulnerable they should contact the practice.

We know that some people may continue to need pharmacy support with repeat medication ordering. Examples are listed below.

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

- Patients who do not have capacity and do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf e.g., patients with learning disabilities, dementia.

For any patients who fall within the exceptions criteria, a relevant member of the practice staff should ensure a note is added on to the patient's record stating that the patient's community pharmacy will continue to order on their behalf.

Patient information

Example of:
Practice 'waiting area' display board

Repeat Prescriptions

From [add date] there will be a change to how repeat prescriptions are ordered

This change only affects patients who are on a repeat prescription, and who order their prescription in the following ways:

- **Have an agreement with a community pharmacy to order/request a prescription on their behalf.**
- **Take their counterfoil prescription to a community pharmacy for them to request prescriptions on their behalf.**

Patients can order their repeat prescription in the following way:

- **Using the prescription request boxes, or over the counter requests within the practice.**
- **Via the NHS app.**
- **Using online ordering services such as SystmOnline or Patient Access**

Patients can continue to have their repeat prescription collected from the GP surgery by their chosen pharmacy, and then collect the medication from their pharmacy.

Please make sure you get the repeat prescription request slip from your pharmacy each time your medicines are dispensed.

Try to re-order your prescription when there is around 7 days' supply of medicines remaining.

This will give enough time (add time) for your practice to process and issue the prescription, and community pharmacies (add time) to dispense your medication.

✓ Please only order the amount of medication you need.

✓ When you collect your medication, please check the order before you leave the pharmacy.

✗ Any medicines returned after you have left the pharmacy cannot be reused.

Example of:

Practice 'waiting area' display screen message

Changes to ordering of repeat prescriptions

From [add date] we will no longer be routinely accepting prescription requests on the patient's behalf by their nominated pharmacy.

Stopping community pharmacy requests aims to address safety and medication waste.

What does this mean for me?

From [add date] you will need to order repeat medications from your GP practice directly or online, rather than from your pharmacy.

Please Note:

- Pharmacies can continue to collect prescriptions on behalf of patients who request this service.
- Patients can have their prescription sent to their preferred pharmacy electronically via the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) (check if your practice is using this option)

How to order your repeat prescription

- **Online** – Request you medication online through [add clinical system info]. Contact the GP practice to register for this service. Alternatively, you could download and register for the NHS app on your smartphone or tablet. This is simple to do and shouldn't take long.
- **At your GP practice** – A prescription request box is available in reception.

We understand that in some cases other methods of medication ordering may be unsuitable.

If this is the case, please let the GP practice know and we will consider the situation on an individual basis.

Example of a poster

Be in the know… About repeat prescription ordering

From [add date] most patients will no longer be able to ask a pharmacy to manage their repeat prescription requests.

How can I order my repeat prescription?

Online – Order online via [add clinical system]. To register for this service please contact your GP practice reception.

NHS App – Request and view repeat prescriptions by logging in to your NHS App

GP practice – A prescription request box is available in reception.

Electronic Repeat Dispensing – Eliminates the need for you to order a prescription from your GP. Speak with a member of the practice to find out if this service is appropriate for you.

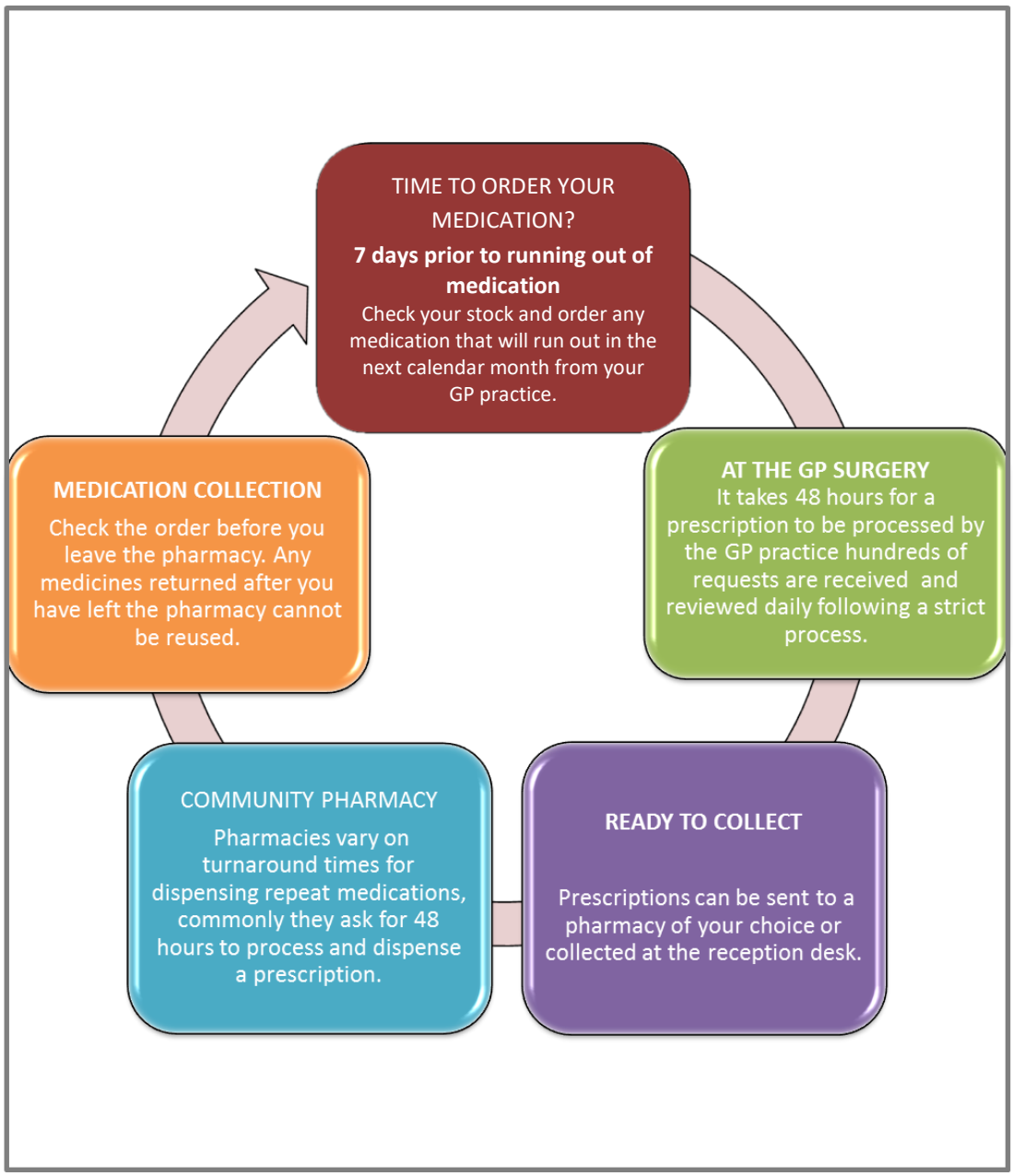
If you are worried that you or someone you know will not be able to order their medication by any of these methods, please speak to your GP practice.

[Add practice contact details]

Example of:

Practice waiting area display board

Ordering your 'Repeat Medication'



EXAMPLE OF: COMMUNITY PHARMACY LETTER TEMPLATE

Dear Community Pharmacy [ADD PHARMACY DETAIL]

We would like to inform you that from [ADD DATE] [ADD PRACTICE DETAILS] will no longer be accepting prescription requests on the patients' behalf by their nominated pharmacy. You will still be able to collect prescriptions from the practice on the patients' behalf if these are unable to be sent electronically.

This decision has been made by the [ADD PRACTICE DETAILS]

We understand that this change may cause inconvenience to some of our patients and because of this we will be happy to consider requests from the pharmacy to continue to order on their behalf in exceptional circumstances, e.g., patients with learning disabilities, dementia, housebound and when other methods may be unsuitable.

We also enclose a copy of the letter being given to patients.

Any outstanding pharmacy orders will not be accepted after [ADD DATE]. If you require any further information, please contact [ADD PRACTICE DETAIL].

Patients will start to be informed from [ADD DATE]

Yours sincerely

EXAMPLE OF: PATIENT LETTER TEMPLATE

Dear Patient [ADD PATIENT DETAILS]

We would like to inform our patients that from [ADD DATE] [ADD PRACTICE DETAILS] will no longer be accepting prescription requests made on your behalf by your nominated pharmacy. The pharmacy can still collect your prescription (if not sent electronically) from us on your behalf [ADD AS PER PRACTICE POLICY] working days after you have ordered it.

This decision has been made by the [ADD PRACTICE DETAILS]

There are several ways you can request your repeat medication:

- You can order your repeat medication online or via the NHS app (www.nhs.uk).
  For those patients who would like online access to their medication record please ask the practice for further details of this effective and accurate way of ordering your repeat medication yourself
- We accept written requests, counterfoil prescription slips handed in to reception or into the drop box
  You may be eligible for the NHS electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD) service, which the practice provides to patients who meet certain criteria. This service eliminates the need for you to order a prescription from your GP every time you require additional medication. Speak with a member of the GP practice to determine if this service is appropriate for you.

We continue to refuse prescription orders over the telephone due to the possibility of errors in prescribing and the need for an audit trail. We would ask you to use the options described above.

We understand that this change may cause inconvenience to some of our patients and because of this we will be happy to consider requests from patients who require the support of the pharmacy to continue to order on their behalf, e.g., patients with learning disabilities, dementia, housebound and when other methods may be unsuitable.

Many thanks for your understanding. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the practice on [ADD CONTACT DETAILS] or by email [ADD EMAIL].

Yours sincerely

EXAMPLE OF: CARE HOME LETTER TEMPLATE

Dear Care Home Manager [ADD CARE HOME CONTACT DETAIL]

We would like to inform care home colleagues that from [ADD DATE] [ADD PRACTICE DETAILS] will no longer be accepting prescription requests made on your residents' behalf by your nominated pharmacy. The pharmacy will still be able to collect the requested prescriptions (if not sent electronically) from us on your behalf [add as per practice policy] working days after you have ordered it.

This decision has been made by the [ADD PRACTICE DETAILS]

We are aware that for care homes many pharmacies offer this service as part of their care home package. However, we believe that patients and their carers are best placed to know exactly what repeat medication is needed and when.

There are several ways your home can request the repeat medication:

- We can set up Proxy access to allow you to order repeat medications online using one log in for all your residents. Speak to your ICB Medicines Optimisation technician if you would like further guidance on proxy ordering.

- We accept online orders for repeat medication.
  For those care homes who would like on-line access to their medication record please ask our reception staff for further details and if this is available
- We accept written requests, counterfoil prescription slips handed in to reception or into the drop box.

We continue to refuse prescription orders over the telephone due to the possibility of errors in prescribing and the need for an audit trail. We would ask you to use the options described above.

Many thanks for your understanding in this matter. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the practice [ADD CONTACT DETAILS] or by email [ADD EMAIL].

Yours sincerely

The information below may be useful to share with any care homes you have aligned to your practice.

Good Practice Information for Care home providers
NICE Guidance - Ordering medicines for people in care homes

(Managing medicines in care homes social care guideline [SC1] Published date: March 2014 https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/sc1/ifp/chapter/ordering-medicines-for-people-in-care-homes)

Ordering medicines is an important part of the work of staff in a care home. Medicines belong to individual people living in care homes and must not be shared between residents, even if 2 of them are taking the same medicines. However, there is an exception to this rule when the care home implements bulk prescribing.

It is important that a care home doesn't run out of a person's medicines. For this reason, care home staff should have time set aside for ordering medicines. Care homes should have at least 2 members of staff who have the training and skills for ordering medicines, although at any given time ordering can be done by 1 member of staff. Staff should check the medicines they receive against the original order to make sure that all medicines needed have been prescribed and supplied and that all records are kept up to date.

Care homes should be responsible for ordering medicines from GP practices and should not pass this responsibility to the local pharmacy.

PrescQIPP - Reducing medicines waste in care homes: Information for care home staff

(*https://www.prescqipp.info/media/1239/b93i-care-homes-reducing-waste-information-for-care-home-staff-21.pdf*)

General advice to reduce waste when ordering medicines.

The care home should retain responsibility for ordering medicines. The responsibility should not be delegated to the community pharmacist.

It is important that the member(s) of staff responsible for ordering medicines only requests items that are needed after checking the stock. Do not routinely clear medicine stocks at the end of the month only to re-order new stock. Medication remaining from the previous cycle should be carried forward to the new cycle.

Ensure any medicines that have been discontinued are not re-ordered. There should be a written procedure for managing medicine changes and a robust process for ordering medication which includes using the current MAR chart.

The prescription produced by the practice should be checked against the prescription request before it is sent to the community pharmacy to ensure there aren't any discrepancies. If an item on the prescription it is not required or has been prescribed in error, it can be crossed through. This must be documented, and the GP practice informed so the electronic records at the practice can be updated. If the prescriptions are sent electronically from the practice to the pharmacy, the dispensing token (copy of the prescription) can be used to check against the prescription request.

For use in practice

Third Party Ordering Review checklist		
Practice name:		
Population size:		
Clinical System:		
	Y/N	Comments
Does the practice have a repeat prescribing policy?		
What are the surgeries concerns/issues with third party ordering?		
Does the practice have a robust process for repeat prescription management in place?		
Does the practice have dedicated staff members to process repeat prescriptions?		
Does the practice use eRD for prescribing for stable patients?		
Does the practice have any care home patients?		
Are the care home patients aligned to one or multiple practices?		
Does the practice have dedicated staff to process care home requests?		
Is the practice a dispensing practice?		
Does the practice have a pharmacy – hybrid practice?		
Once the decision has been made by the practice to stop third-party ordering the following steps will support the practice during implementation.		

			✓
Agree a lead clinician for the project			
Agree a lead admin staff or practice manager for the project			
Agree roles/responsibilities for all staff involved in the process			
Agree how communication will be shared with all staff within the practice to ensure transparency			
Agree a timeline to complete the process (3 months being the minimum to ensure a safe and robust process)			
Liaise with your patient participation group (PPG)			
Liaise with your local community pharmacies (including online pharmacies)			
Increase the practice online ordering to reduce footfall			
Increase electronic prescription service (EPS) to reduce paper/printing costs			
Consider implementing or increasing the use of electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD)			
Agree exclusion criteria for patients excluded from process e.g., patients with dementia, learning difficulties, housebound, no access to online ordering, dosette patients (care home patients if excluded from project)			
Liaise with community pharmacies to share patient lists requiring continued pharmacy support to order their medication			

Agree process to continue to identify and record excluded patients as an ongoing process. E.g., read coded entry, icon on clinical system, responsible staff member(s) to monitor/record		
Agree forms of communication to patients with regards to the change in process e.g., letters, script notes, text message, emails, posters, leaflets, practice website		
Agree forms of communication to community pharmacies with regards to the change in process e.g., letters, leaflets, posters		
Agree with community pharmacies the process for patients who do not order medication on time due to change in process e.g., emergency supply - agree a time frame to allow for this (e.g., 4-6 weeks post stop date)		