Welcome to Hints and Tips
Dispensing Contractors

Pharmacy
Dispensing Doctors
Prescribing-only GPs
(Personal Administration)
Appliance Contractors

Issue 34
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Welcome to the January 2019 issue of Hints & Tips, your regular newsletter full of helpful ideas and advice.

If you have any suggestions for topics you’d like us to cover in future issues please let us know at nhsbsa.communicationsteam@nhs.net
Do you want to save time on your prescription administration?

Here at the NHS Business Services Authority we’re working hard to support the digital agenda across the wider NHS, and moving towards a paperless prescription service.

We need your help to do this.

By maximising the use of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) you can help while also saving time and money.

Want to increase these benefits further?

Why not use electronic repeat dispensing (eRD) for repeat patients you feel are suitable? We can help your GP identify patients who might be suitable for eRD – all they have to do is get in touch with us.

What are the benefits for dispensers?

Through increased EPS use, dispensers can benefit from:

- less time spent on administration and collecting prescriptions, which means more time for helping customers
- less sorting and less paper to send to NHS Business Services Authority
- automated downloads, making prescription processing more efficient
- decreased waste and increased savings, as less printing is needed
- improved stock control and greater accuracy, with reduced medicine waste
- a prescription collection service no longer being needed
- improved patient satisfaction through reduced waiting times
- increased accuracy, meaning fewer prescription queries

Why not come along to our ‘Let’s Talk Electronic Prescription Service’ events?

Over a snack and some tea/coffee, it’s where we get together with pharmacy and GP colleagues to explore collaborative solutions and share best practice about how we can increase the use of EPS and eRD.

There are events being scheduled near our offices at various times and locations all of which are listed on our website. Keep checking for updates to the events list.

To find out more about EPS, and our ‘Let’s Talk Electronic Prescription Service’ events, please visit www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/EPS or email nhsbsa.epssupport@nhs.net for more information.
The reality of EPS and eRD - GP Blog

For those considering the benefits of EPS and eRD there are often worries about how it would work in practice. Dr Jonathan Lake has written a blog about his experience. Here is the brief outline, you can read the full blog on the [NHSBSA blog page](#).

Hello, I’m Jonathan, a GP at Sunnyside Medical Centre (in Portsmouth, if you’re wondering). I’ve been a GP at my practice for 10 years.

I have been interested in doing this ever since I attended a presentation at a GP event ran by our CCG. A presenter (another GP) had managed to move about 80% of his patients on repeat prescriptions to electronic repeat dispensing. This figure really surprised me! He then went on to share how much time this saved and how it improved safety for the patients. How did it do this? Well, prescriptions are updated more systematically via EPS and there is no need for patients to request their medicines every month or two, this is carried out annually. This doesn’t just simplify the process for patients, but for the GP surgery and pharmacies alike.

When technology advances met my GP practice

My initial enthusiasm for eRD was met with a little scepticism from our team as they’d (unsuccessfully) trialled this with patients previously. Why? Because the amendments required for their paper repeat prescriptions meant that the system wasn’t as efficient as it could be, for those particular cases. This led to disillusioned patients, admin staff and GPs.

Subsequently, my request to move to eRD was met with a flat refusal!

I bided my time and saw another opportunity when we changed our clinical system to ‘SystmOne’. It was also the time when electronic prescribing was implemented, meaning that paper scripts could be gone and changes to scripts could be made much more easily.

For those who are unsure, paper scripts are simply prescriptions issued on pieces of paper that are either taken to the pharmacy by patients or sent to the pharmacy by the GP practice. They are difficult to make changes to once issued and can be hard to track down once lost (hence the benefits of EPS!).

We began to look at patients who picked up their prescriptions at two local pharmacies (who we also had good working relationships with) and once identified, worked in collaboration with them to move the selected patients over to eRD, initially for a four week pilot.

Nothing seemed to go wrong, and we were all delighted (especially as it was over Christmas
when it can be difficult to order repeat prescriptions)! This pilot solved the problem straight away. It was a quick, early win for all involved.

**Real-time testing**

The next phase was to look at other patients with seven day scripts. We contacted the relevant pharmacies and slowly moved all of these patients to eRD and began to extend the number of repeats issued from four to eight to then twelve.

My colleagues and I noticed an immediate reduction in the number of prescriptions we had to sign, a welcome relief.

Just to note; we had limited success in moving people with stable medications over to eRD as many of them already had their medication ordered by the pharmacy, so were already receiving a smooth service.

**The support I received has been above and beyond my expectations**

When we hit the challenges, we were a little bit stuck and were very fortunate to be offered some support from the Wessex AHSN and the NHSBSA.

We had visitors from the NHSBSA to do a time and motion study of our (then) repeat prescribing process. We received value-adding guidance about how to communicate with pharmacies and co-authored a letter to encourage repeat nominations from local pharmacies for patients who are still ordering their medication on paper.

We also had support from the South Central LPC, EPS lead, Patrick Leppard, who began to visit local pharmacies and to encourage them to use eRD, something that we had not addressed properly with pharmacies outside our usual catchment area.

> **My colleagues and I noticed an immediate reduction in the number of prescriptions we had to sign, a welcome relief.**
**Bringing everyone along the journey**

**Step 1:** I realised that the bedrock of eRD was getting as many people nominated on EPS as possible. I reminded my colleagues how GPs and nurses could nominate their patients and we continue to work together on this.

**Step 2:** Our operations Manager, Simon Evans, had set up a screen reminder for us to follow (it simply reminds clinicians to speak to patients about nomination who do not have an EPS nomination on their records).

**Step 3:** Once this was complete, Steve from the NHSBSA supplied four different text messages to send to patients who were on repeat medicines, but not EPS. We identified four sub-groups and sent these off, auditing the uptake of EPS across the groups.

**Step 4:** We began to identify patients who are on stable medications to find suitable patients for EPS and eRD. Once receiving the list, I worked through this and segmented the patients into who were and who were not suitable. This also required us to have an IG sharing note (a notice which we have to put up to notify patients of how their information is being used) on our practice website, which we were able to sort out quickly.

**What have I learnt?**

Being part of the EPS and eRD journey has made me realise quite how complex it is. In particular, how it is only going to work if we link up well with our pharmacy colleagues, something which I do not think we have a good history of in primary care, outside the one or two pharmacies that we deal with most regularly.

Personally, I’ve seen many benefits in my day-to-day life as a GP. I have fewer paper scripts to sign each day, have a safer and better organised process for re-authorising medicines when they are based around eRD and we have better relationships with our community pharmacy colleagues because of the links we have from working on eRD.

**And, what’s next?**

We’ll be starting to look at eRD as a routine part of our Long Term Condition review process, meaning that suitable patients will be asked if they are happy to move to eRD in their annual review and it will be automatically facilitated after that appointment.

This will make the process ‘one-stop’ and timing wise, we hope to start this in around February this year. To help the administration of this, we have employed a Pharmacy Technician who will liaise with patients, pharmacies and clinicians and oversee the process.

If you have any questions on the above or would like any further information, please email the NHSBSA on nhsbsa.epssupport@nhs.net

**Personally, I’ve seen many benefits in my day-to-day life as a GP. I have fewer paper scripts to sign each day.**
Proof of exemption from NHS charges

We’re making changes to our prescription prepayment and maternity exemption services.

Following the successful introduction of paper NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificates in March 2018, plastic exemption cards for prescription prepayment certificates (PPCs) and maternity exemption (Matex) certificates will soon be replaced with paper certificates.

As part of the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) service improvement programme, paper certificates are replacing plastic cards to generate significant savings for the NHS to put back into patient care.

Further savings are being created with our digital services, where we are trialling digital PPC and Matex certificates, receivable by email.

During the transition period, plastic, paper and digital certificates can all be accepted as proof of exemption from NHS charges as long as they are valid when the patient collects their medication.

If you don’t see the certificate, please cross the ‘exemption not seen’ box on the FP10 prescription.

“Paper certificates are replacing plastic cards to generate significant savings for the NHS to put back into patient care.”
We want to support patients in the daily management of their healthcare needs and our online service is accessible, easy to use and customer-focused.

Our digital route allows people to get a PPC instantly and is quicker and easier than the current paper process.

We want to ensure customers find it as easy as possible to get a PPC, which means making sure as many pharmacies are registered to sell or can direct a customer on how they can get a PPC.

We’re encouraging people to apply:

- online at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc)
- online with a registered pharmacy; or if they need extra help
- by calling our Contact Centre on 0300 330 1341

We are phasing out paper prescription prepayment certificates (PPCs) application forms to create savings in time and money as well as reducing our environmental impact. We will no longer be producing postal application forms.
Customers can check their exemption status

It is important customers do not use their certificate after it expires. We check that patients who claim for free NHS prescriptions are entitled to the exemption they have declared. If they claim after their certificate has expired, they could face a penalty charge up to a maximum of £100.

Customers can check their exemption status at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/exemption](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/exemption)
Register your pharmacy for online PPC applications

There are more than 11,000 community pharmacies in England and 4,000 of you are currently registered to sell prescription prepayment certificates (PPCs). We want to encourage all pharmacies to sign up for the digital route.

What are the benefits for pharmacies?

- Submit your customers’ PPC applications to the NHSBSA faster.
- Receive real-time confirmation that the application has been successful, with the customer’s certificate details.
- Add the certificate number and expiry date straight onto your Pharmacy Management System.
- No need to post PPC applications to the NHSBSA, reducing the concern of it being lost in transit and customers receiving penalty charges.
Our updated online service follows Government Digital Service (GDS) best practice design principles for ease of use, accessibility and security. With our service updates, you can now issue a digital certificate to customers and they can receive their digital PPC instantly by email.

So, if you’re not already registered, complete our pharmacy register form [https://apps.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacy-ppc/login](https://apps.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacy-ppc/login)

Registering is quick and easy. You will be sent an email confirmation when your pharmacy has been activated on the system and your password for accessing the online service will be sent by post for security reasons.

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### Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC) Process

**Patient is paying for their medication?**

Yes → Continue to receive prescription as normal

No → Does the patient expect to have more than 3 items in 3 months or 11 items in 12 months on prescription?

Yes → Charge customer according to items on their current prescription

No → Inform customer they may be able to save money by buying a PPC. Ask them if they would be interested in purchasing this today?

Yes → Charge customer according to items on their current prescription

No → Collect the information needed to process a PPC

Remind the customer that if they provide an email address, the certificate can be sent by email straight away

Process the application through pharmacy sales online [https://apps.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacy-ppc/PharmacyLoginPage.do](https://apps.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacy-ppc/PharmacyLoginPage.do)

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### Please remember

Customers can check if they are eligible for help with their health costs at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check)

As long as the PPC covers the date of dispensing, the customer can collect their prescriptions for free.

They should mark box ‘F’ on the back of the prescription form and sign the declaration.

If you don’t see the certificate, please cross the ‘exemption not seen’ box.

Customers can check their exemption status at: [http://services.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check-for-help-paying-nhs-costs/start-exempt](http://services.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check-for-help-paying-nhs-costs/start-exempt)

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For more support: telephone: 0191 203 4945 or email: nhsbsa.patientservicetechnicalteam@nhs.net

(These details are for pharmacy use only and should not be given to customers)
Useful links on our website

NHS England and Wales Drug Tariff

Information about sending in your reimbursement and remuneration claims
www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/submitting-prescriptions/sending-your-claim

NHS Prescription Services open days and webinar sessions

More information

For more information you can access our online knowledge base ‘Ask Us’ at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/AskUs or contact us at nhsbsa.prescriptionservices@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

You can also call us on 0300 330 1349.
Our opening hours are 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday