**Completing the Prescription search request form – guidance notes for STPs (formerly Area Teams) and hospitals**

As prescriptions are processed retrospectively, the most recent prescriptions will not become available until we have completed each individual processing cycle. Prescription images are available for the most recently processed five months and we can offer a quicker retrieval service for these. **Please note that prescription paper forms are held for 6 months and then securely destroyed in line with NHS Business Services retention policy. This is carried out on a rolling monthly basis. Prescription images are available for 18 months after processing.**

As we do not store prescriptions by patient details, we need all the mandatory details completed on the request form to enable us to find the prescription you need in a timely manner. It will currently take up to four weeks to process requests for copies of paper prescriptions.

Requests should preferably be only for one month’s data at a time. Requests for multiple months’ data may cause delays, and requests for more than three months’ prescriptions may take longer than four weeks. If your request is urgent and you need a response in less than four weeks, please indicate this in the ‘Additional information’ section of the form. Please tell us when the data is required by and we will do all we can to achieve this.

Please only request prescription forms where there is significant evidence to warrant the need to view the prescription form. It would help us to meet your request if you could provide the dispensing month, dispenser ref. number (starting with an F), prescription form number and product details from [ePACT2.](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/access-our-data-products/epact2)  EPACT2 has a Prescriber Dispenser template report which provides most of this information and instructions on use of the template is available on NHSBSA website <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/access-our-data-products/epact2/user-guides>

Select:

* Accessing standard report templates
* Accessing useful report templates

If you receive a prescription request form completed by a **prescriber,** please either:

a) **authorise** the request by signing and dating the bottom of the form. Please then forward the form to us with the relevant ePACT2 data. We will then issue the prescriptions to the Prescriber

**or**

b) **refuse** the request and inform the prescriber. If the PCO requires the prescription forms, they will need to submit a replacement prescription request form with the PCO contact details. Please then forward the form to us with the relevant ePACT2 data.

**Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and other Primary Care Organisations (PCOs)**

CCG’s/CSU’s, Public Health and other provider organisations can ask for copies directly but they will only receive redacted images showing no patient identifiable or endorsement information.

CCGs and other PCOs must apply to their STP/Area Team for prescription requests if they require unredacted copies.

**Prescriber requests**

Prescribers must complete the STP/Area Team version of the form and submit it to their STP/Area Team for authorisation.

**Hospitals only**

Please note that when hospitals agreed to receive ePACT information it was on the understanding that the NHS Prescription Services would not routinely provide prescriptions except for cases of fraud or mis-prescribing enquires.

**Data security**

If your request includes individual patient or prescriber details please only send it to us **by secure means**. If you use NHSmail then you can securely send the information to us by email. If not, you will need to fax your request with a formal headed cover sheet.