

## **LEICESTER CITY CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP**

### **REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS AND PHARMACIES**

#### **About repeat prescriptions**

1. A GP can decide whether he or she needs to see a patient for every medicine that is to be issued or, alternatively, they can set up the GP clinical system to allow the patient to request a repeat medication themselves. This can be then be done, without an appointment, for a set number of prescription issues (normally 6-12 months) at intervals of 28 days. In some cases this can be extended to 56 days for regular daily medication or in fixed amounts for medicines taken only as and when required. Appendix A provides more information on this process.
2. There is no fixed time frame for the review of repeat prescriptions. This is because there are many factors that will affect the need for review and frequency. The GP will make a clinical decision on an appropriate timescale for the individual patient.
3. Reviews can take place with a patient face-to-face, by phone or, in some instances, the GP may choose to undertake a review using his knowledge of the patient and by taking into account any test results and entries in the clinical record system.
4. Some of the factors affecting the level and frequency of review are listed below:
  - Medicines being prescribed
  - Indication of the medicines
  - Monitoring requirements for the medicine/condition
  - Number or conditions the patient has
  - Stability of the patient's health
  - Frailty and vulnerability
  - The patient may fall under one of the Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) clinical areas for review.
5. The prescriber should agree with the patient what medicines are appropriate and how their condition will be managed, including a date for review. The prescriber should make it clear why regular reviews are important and explain to the patient what they should do if they:
  - Suffer side effects or adverse reactions, or
  - Stop taking the medicines before the agreed review date (or a set number of repeats have been issued).

#### **Requesting repeat prescriptions**

6. Every paper prescription form (FP10) consists of two parts. The left hand side is the prescription that will be handed into the pharmacy to dispense the medication. The right hand side is used for repeat medications (where permitted) to allow the patient to request repeats of their medicines. This is usually referred to as a 'repeat slip'.

7. The right hand side of the prescription, or repeat slip, has been in existence since the National introduction of electronic patient records which then allowed computer generated prescriptions in GP practices. This dates back to at least the early 1990s, and so has been in place for well over 25 years.
8. The patient reorders the prescription using the repeat slip and either they, or their representative (this could be a community pharmacy), make the request. They are informed when they should be able to collect the prescription and any queries arising from the request may be clarified at this stage.
9. Patients registered with GP online can order their repeat prescriptions electronically, and if signed up to the Electronic prescription service, have them transferred electronically to their nominated pharmacy.

### **Issuing repeat prescriptions**

10. At this stage an administrative check is undertaken to ensure that the repeat is authorised, if it is due, or if a medicines review is required. If not, the prescription is brought to the attention of the prescriber who then determines whether a prescription can be issued as requested or whether the patient should see the prescriber.
11. A paper prescription is generated by administration staff and is then given to the prescriber for signing. The prescription is signed and returned to practice staff for collection by the patient or their representative. If a review is required or overdue, the patient is advised of this and an appointment made.
12. Electronic requests using GP online (an online tool for patients to make appointment and requests repeat prescriptions) will go straight to the prescriber to sign electronically.
13. A prescription can be paper or electronic providing that the patient has nominated a pharmacy for their electronic prescription. A GP practice normally requires two full working days to complete this process.

### **Collecting repeat prescription forms**

14. A patient can collect their repeat prescription form from the practice, ask a carer or representative to collect it on their behalf, or join a managed repeat prescription collection service with a local pharmacy.
15. If a patient signs up to GP online and the electronic prescription service the request can be completed electronically, with the prescription sent directly to their pharmacy of choice.

### **Dispensing a repeat prescription**

16. Pharmacies normally advise patients to allow at least one full working day before collecting medicines. This is for a clinical check to be made of the prescription

and for the prescription to be completed safely and accurately. This applies if the product is in stock at the pharmacy or if it needs to be ordered from a wholesaler.

17. Sometimes these timeframes are not met. This can be because an item is out of stock at a wholesaler or manufacturer, which will mean that the patient may need to return once the item is available. The item may also be a special order product, which means that it needs to be made as there is not a licensed product available.
18. There is a significant national issue with the availability of some commonly prescribed items. This affects all community pharmacies and sometimes leads patients to believe that the pharmacy is not providing the appropriate level of service. Normally any issues with the availability of an item will be flagged with the prescriber so that they can consider the prescribing of a suitable alternative.
19. If a patient has any concerns about any of their medications they should talk to their pharmacist or practice. This includes excessive amounts of medication being dispensed.

### **Measuring performance of pharmacies in relation to repeat prescriptions**

20. The Community Pharmacy contract and associated monitoring of providers comes under the Remit of NHS England, not the CCG.
21. As a general guide, GP practices will take a two full working days to generate a prescription and most pharmacies will then take a further day to dispense the medication. This means that if a prescription request is handed in at 3pm on a Monday it would be processed by the practice by close of play Wednesday. It would then be collected by the pharmacy that evening or first thing the following day. It should then be ready for the patient by Friday morning at the latest, depending on availability of stock.
22. In reality the process is often shorter. However, it is important that patients recognise that repeat prescriptions could take up to these stated timeframes.
23. Unfortunately, there is no hard and fast definition of whether a prescription is dispensed on time. This is because there are many factors, some of which that are beyond the control of a pharmacy, that will influence the time taken. For example, this includes:
  - GP time taken on issuing the repeat prescription
  - An item not being on the prescription
  - Items that need to be ordered, which takes more time - although community pharmacies have a least two deliveries a day in the week and one on a Saturday
  - Items may be out of stock at a wholesaler or manufacturer
  - The item may be a special order product that takes more time.
24. Leicester City CCG has conducted three simultaneous patient, GP practice and Community Pharmacy engagement exercises to look at what works well, what

doesn't work so well and what can be improved for repeat prescription services. This work is currently ongoing, with outcomes and recommendations expected to be published early in the New Year.

25. It should be recognised that patient online ordering and electronic transfer of prescriptions should improve the process and this is being rolled out nationally.

### **Pharmacy location**

26. We do not believe that there are significantly greater benefits or restrictions in having pharmacies co-located with practices. Indeed, it is important to have a mix of locations for patient choice.
27. Prescriptions cannot be directed by a practice to any specific pharmacy. This is because the patient has the right to choose where their prescriptions go for dispensing.
28. Some city practices do have pharmacies on the premises. However, not all of the practice's prescriptions go to the onsite pharmacy for the reasons outlined above. While some patients might find this convenient, others prefer to have their prescription sent to their local high street pharmacy or a supermarket pharmacy. Some patients also choose to have their prescriptions sent to online pharmacies. Most community pharmacies also offer a repeat prescription collection and delivery service.
29. The repeat prescription collection and delivery service is a free of charge voluntary service from some community pharmacy providers that patients need to sign up to and give consent for. All the usual checks are made and then a delivery driver will deliver to the door and hand medication or products to the patient or their representative at the address on the prescription.
30. In terms of pharmacy locations, there are national requirements to be met before a pharmacy contract is granted. The CCG has no control over this as it comes under the remit of NHS England. NHS England, in turn, must adhere to national requirements for granting a community pharmacy contract.
31. Appended to this document is a copy of the service specification for *Dispensing and Repeat Dispensing* for members' information. All pharmacies should also display clear information about what to do if a patient has a complaint or concern. Generally, a patient can do this by talking to the pharmacy direct, with the head office of large chains, or by contacting the NHS England complaints team in their capacity as the responsible commissioner.

## Appendix one: Repeat Prescriptions - a quick Guide

Stage	Who by	How	Timeframe	Issues
Authorising repeat prescription process	The Prescriber caring for the patient at the practice: GP nurse /pharmacist prescriber	Prescriber would add permission for repeats to the clinical system. Could also suggest GP online	Prescriber will set prescription length and number of repeats normally 6 - 12months	Patient goes to collect prescription before timeframe guidance.  Items need to be ordered either as normal stock or a special stock  Items not available from wholesaler for normal pharmacy order schedule.
Requesting a repeat prescription	Patient, carer/representative Nominated pharmacy	Paper repeat request form. Electronic request through GP online. Electronic Batch prescriptions	From request to dispensed ready to collect takes 3 full working days. 2 days for GP practices and 1 day for community pharmacy depending on availability of items.	Manufacturer supply problem meaning that there is no stock available or the pharmacy needs to try and obtain stock from other locations or have the order added to a backlist  Problems with the NHSE spine pulling down electronic prescriptions. The NHS spine is an electronic system and as such there may be problems with this outside of the pharmacies control which means that if a script is electronic then it may not be available when expected by a patient.
Issuing a repeat prescription	GP practice	Paper prescriptions for GP to sign Electronic prescriptions authorised by prescriber.		
Collecting a repeat prescription	Patient, carer/representative Nominated pharmacy in person or electronically	Patient, carer/representative Nominated pharmacy in person or electronically		
Dispensing a repeat prescription	Community pharmacy chosen by the patient/carers	From a paper or electronic prescription		
Delivery of a repeat prescription	Community pharmacy	By a designated delivery driver	Once the prescription is complete.	