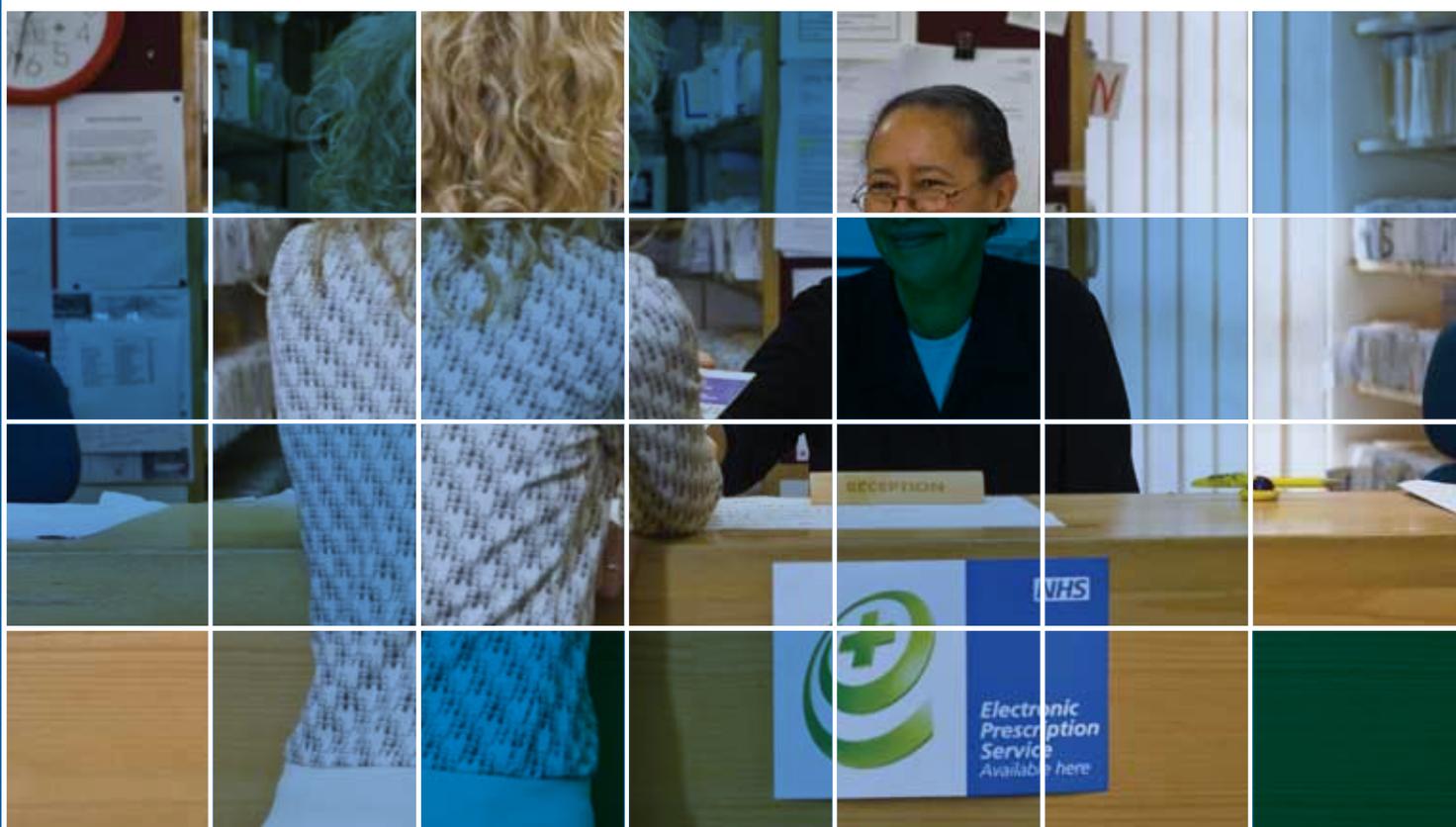


Electronic repeat dispensing



Electronic Prescription Service Release 2

An extract from Business Process Guidance for Initial Implementers April 2009



Electronic repeat dispensing (repeatable prescriptions)

Release 2 of the Electronic Prescription Service will support the repeat dispensing process. While it largely mirrors that of the existing paper-based repeat dispensing process, some of the constraints associated with the paper-based process are removed, making it easier to use and manage.

Detailed guidance on paper-based repeat dispensing is available in the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) Distance Learning Booklet 'Repeat Dispensing – From Pathfinder to Practice' which can be ordered online at the CPPE Website <http://www.cppe.manchester.ac.uk>

Unlike conventional paper-based repeat dispensing, electronic repeat dispensing is possible from a single electronic prescription and does not require paper batch issues to be printed.

When issuing an electronic repeatable prescription, the prescriber will authorise a prescription with a specified number of repeats (issues). Each repeat contains the same prescribed items. When using Release 2, prescribers are required to issue a prescription token to the patient, this will have the words 'Repeatable Prescription Authorising Token' printed on it.

A repeatable prescription will be dispensed under the repeat dispensing regime. Once a repeat dispensing regime has been authorised, each subsequent repeat will be made available for the nominated pharmacy system to download seven days in advance of the next repeat being due. The system automatically works out from any interval set by the prescriber when the next repeat is due. If an interval has not been set by the prescriber the system will default to a 28 day interval. However, this default of 28 days can be changed locally depending on local circumstances.

It is possible for a pharmacy to pull down repeats in advance of them being sent automatically from the EPS if a pharmacist believes that a repeat should be dispensed at an earlier time, as long as all items on the previous repeat are marked as either 'dispensed' or 'not dispensed'.

Patients should be encouraged to keep hold of their repeat dispensing authorising token for the duration of the prescription. The prescription token acts as an 'aide memoire' for the patient, as well as listing what is on the repeat it will also be printed with the name of the pharmacy they have nominated. If the patient keeps hold of their repeat dispensing authorising token it also makes it easier to change their nomination part way through a repeat dispensing regime.

If the patient finds they do not have a supply of medication, they can take their prescription token to any Release 2 enabled pharmacy to obtain their next repeat.

If the patient needs to sign for their prescription, a dispensing token should be printed for them to sign.

Once all authorised repeats have been dispensed, or if the prescription has expired, or been completed, the pharmacist should encourage the patient to contact their prescriber to obtain another repeatable prescription (where required).

In the initial stages of Release 2, electronic repeat dispensing will only be available to patients who decide to use a nominated dispensing contractor. If the patient changes their nomination part way through a repeat dispensing cycle, all outstanding prescription repeats will be transferred to their new nominated dispensing contractor.

In the longer term, patients will be able to take part in electronic repeat dispensing even if they do not wish to use a nominated pharmacy. This means that patients will be able to use any Release 2 enabled pharmacy to obtain their medication – not necessarily the same one each time. (Patients who have nominated can also do this).

The benefits of using electronic repeat dispensing

As more patients move to repeat dispensing regimes, the number of requests for repeat prescriptions will reduce (thus lessening the administrative burden on GP practices and patients). Benefits of electronic repeat dispensing over the existing process, include:

Benefits for patients

- In the shorter term, patients who have nominated and are participating in electronic repeat dispensing can change their nomination at any time.
- In the longer term, if a patient has not nominated, they will be able to obtain the next repeat from any Release 2 enabled pharmacy with the use of their prescription token. For example, if they are away from home and have forgotten to take their medication with them.

Benefits for prescribers

- Prescribers are more likely to move patients who currently receive regular repeat prescriptions to repeat dispensing regimes as they will no longer need to print multiple paper batch issues.
- Electronic repeat dispensing regimes can be cancelled easily, at any time prior to the prescription repeat being dispensed, giving prescribers a greater level of control over the regime.

Benefits for dispensers

- Dispensers will no longer need to retain and store repeatable prescriptions and paper batch issues for audit purposes.

Questions and answers

Are patients required to consent to electronic repeatable prescriptions?

As now, patients must give informed consent to the sharing of information between the dispenser and prescriber, before participating in the repeat dispensing service, both for paper-based and electronic repeat dispensing arrangements.

If a patient has already signed up to paper-based repeat dispensing, is there a need to repeat the consent process when transferring the patient onto electronic repeat dispensing?

Not necessarily; this will depend on local procedures for patients' use of EPS and repeat dispensing.

Will patients who are currently on paper-based repeat dispensing automatically be migrated to electronic repeat dispensing when the clinical system is upgraded to EPS Release 2?

No. Patients who are currently on a paper-based repeat dispensing regime will not be automatically transferred to electronic repeat dispensing, either when the system goes live, or when future repeats are required. Prescribers are encouraged to communicate the benefits of repeat dispensing to suitable patients and transfer these patients onto electronic repeat dispensing. In most cases the clinical system will remind them to do so.

When does an electronic repeatable prescription expire?

As with paper-based repeat dispensing, an electronic repeatable prescription has to be dispensed for the first time within six months of the date it was generated and is valid for 12 months from when it was written.

Why are patients given a prescription token at the start of a repeat dispensing regime?

The prescription token also acts as an 'aide memoire' for the patient if they have forgotten which pharmacy they have nominated. It also makes it easier for a patient to change their nomination part way through a repeat dispensing regime.

If the patient finds they do not have a supply of medication (for example, if they are on holiday and forgot to take their medication with them), they can take their prescription token to any Release 2 enabled pharmacy to obtain their next repeat.

Can nurse prescribers and supplementary prescribers prescribe medicines through electronic repeat dispensing arrangements?

Yes. As long as they comply with certain requirements specified in the regulations.

Can appliances be prescribed as part of an electronic repeat dispensing regime?

Yes, however, currently dispensing appliance contractors are not permitted to dispense repeat dispensing prescriptions.

What happens if a patient, on electronic repeat dispensing, tries to obtain a repeat (issue) from a dispensing practice or a dispensing appliance contractor?

The patient should be advised to take their prescription token to a Release 2 enabled pharmacy to obtain their prescription items.

Can a patient change their nomination during an electronic repeat dispensing regime?

Yes. Patients participating in electronic repeat dispensing and who have a nomination in place can change their nominated dispensary at any time. See nomination guidance.

Is a dispenser restricted to dispensing the next available repeatable prescription?

No. As long as all items on the previous repeat are accounted for, either dispensed or indicated not dispensed (dispensed to the patient and a dispense notification sent) a pharmacist can dispense the next repeat in advance, for example if the patient is going on holiday.

During electronic repeat dispensing, can a dispenser retrieve the next repeat if the previous one has only been partially dispensed?

No, the dispenser must complete the previous repeat by marking it as either dispensed or not dispensed before being able to retrieve the next repeat.

When will nominated repeatable prescriptions be available to download by the pharmacy?

Once a repeat dispensing regime has been authorised, each subsequent repeat will be made available for the nominated pharmacy system to download seven days in advance of the next repeat being due. The system automatically works out from any interval set by the prescriber when the next repeat is due. If an interval has not been set by the prescriber the system will default to a 28 day interval. However, this default of 28 days can be changed locally depending on local circumstances.

Dispensing systems will be able to automatically download nominated prescriptions overnight. However, manual requests for nominated prescriptions can be made as frequently as the dispenser requires throughout the day.