**Ordering of Prescriptions during the COVID-19 Outbreak** **Recommendations for Practices**

Practices will already have guidance in place for the recommended ways that patients can order their prescriptions. These will be in line with [NHS Warrington CCG Repeat Prescribing Guidance](https://www.warringtonccg.nhs.uk/Medicines%20Management/Repeat%20Prescribing%20and%20Ordering%20Guidance%20September%202018.pdf) and Repeat Ordering principles.

Under normal circumstances patients should order their repeat medication:

* Via an approved online access webpage or mobile app
* Directly with the practices using the counterfoil or other practice approved method.

During the COVID-19 outbreak it may not be possible for patients to use either of these methods, therefore alternative methods and relaxation of the Repeat Ordering principles will need to be **temporarily** introduced. However it is imperative that any alternative methods are carried out in a safe and consistent manner. To support practices with this, NHS Warrington CCG Medicines Management Team have made the following recommendations:

**Telephone Requests**

**Do:**

* Check the patients are unable to order via one of the recommended methods above before taking the telephone request.
* Check patients have a nominated pharmacy to enable the prescription to go via EPS to reduce the requirement to have the prescription printed and collected.
* Ensure that the usual checks, such as due dates/last ordered dates, are made when processing a request to ensure the request is appropriate and to avoid patient stock piling.
* Advise patients to only order medication that they require.
* Only take requests for named medication rather than descriptions such as “blue inhaler" or "blood pressure tablets”, ask the patients to spell them out if necessary.
* Print the B side of the prescription and clearly mark the requested medication and process via the prescription clerk as normal.
* Identify the request as a telephone request by annotating the request with’ TP request’ and your name in case of queries.
* Read back the request when complete to allow the patient to confirm as correct.
* Advise patients that they will need to make arrangements with their pharmacy should they require a delivery this is not the responsibility of the practice, so they do not assume it has been arranged.
* Inform patient that the request will be processed in the normal turnaround time.

**Don’t**

* Accept requests for "all my repeat items" without going through each item.
* Accept requests where the patient is able to order via an alternate recommended method in order to minimise error.
* Accept requests where medication is not due in order to reduce stock piling.
* Assume pharmacies have capacity to deliver all prescriptions and be mindful some pharmacies charge for deliveries.

**Email Requests**

If patients wish to order their medication via email and practices have the facility for this, practices need to inform patients of the following, either via the practice website, leaflet or an auto response:

* The email must include your full name, DOB and address.
* Medication requests will only be accepted where the medication is clearly written by name; Descriptions of medication will not be accepted.
* Medication will only be issued when it is due, usually 7-10 days before your last issue has run out.
* If you have not assigned a nominated pharmacy for the transmission of electronic prescriptions you must liaise with your pharmacy to arrange collection of the prescription and arrange for your dispensed medication to be collected or delivered. Deliveries may be subject to availability and may be charged. Practices should encourage ALL patients to nominate a pharmacy for future prescriptions.

Practice will need a robust practice method to ensure these email are checked and actioned within a suitable timeframe

**Pharmacy ordering**

Patients may ask their pharmacy to order on their behalf due to self-isolation and the pharmacy may agree. The Repeat Ordering principles maybe relaxed temporarily under the following circumstances. If the patient has no other means of ordering i.e.via the recommended methods above and no friends or family who can do it on their behalf, a Community Pharmacy can order for the patient for the period of self-isolation only but should **not** be read coded as such as they will return to ordering in the normal manner when no longer in self-isolation.

**Informing Patients**

Practices may want to inform patients of the temporary changes on how they can order their repeat prescriptions. This could be done by issuing a practice information leaflet, via their website, use of posters, electronic message boards, texts and recorded messages on the answer machine/telephone. This is particularly important if practices need to close temporarily, instructions for how patients can order should be clearly displayed on the entrance to the practice.