

Dispensing Factsheet: Is This Prescription Form Valid?

Only certain types of prescription form can be dispensed on the NHS so it is important for pharmacy teams to be able to identify which form types are allowed and which are not. Form types can be identified by the code on the bottom right of a prescription.

Eligibility

The following prescription forms can be dispensed by NHS community pharmacies in England and Wales.

For information on forms originating in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man, and prescription forms that are not eligible, see: psnc.org.uk/prescriptionforms

Forms originating in England

Form type and colour	Who can use or what they are used for	Further information
Green FP10 FP10NC FP10HNC FP10SS	GPs, hospital doctors, and independent/supplementary prescribers (pharmacists, midwives, nurses, chiropodists/ podiatrists, physiotherapists, radiographers, optometrists), or out of hours centres if correctly annotated.	Forms annotated with the initials RD are repeat dispensing forms. Forms annotated with the initials RA are repeat authorisation forms.
Blue FP10MDA FP10MDA-S FP10HMDA-S FP10MDA-SS FP10MDA-SP	Instalment dispensing prescription form.	More information can be found on our Instalment Dispensing page at: psnc.org.uk/mda
Lilac FP10P FP10PN FP10CN FP10SP	Independent/supplementary prescribers.	The form should be printed with information to identify the type of prescriber, for example, 'community practitioner nurse prescriber (formerly known as district nurse/health visitors)' or 'nurse independent prescriber or supplementary prescriber'. Only items listed in the relevant formularies can be prescribed on this prescription.
Yellow FP10D	Dentists in primary care.	Only items listed in the dental formulary can be prescribed on this prescription.

Forms originating in Wales

Form type and colour	Who can use or what they are used for	Further information
Green WP10 WP10SS WP10SP WP10HP WP10HSP	GPs, hospitals and supplementary prescribers.	Forms annotated with the initials RD are repeat dispensing forms. Forms annotated with the initials RA are repeat authorisation forms.
Green WP10D	Dentists in primary care.	Only items listed in the dental formulary can be prescribed on this prescription.
Green WP10CN WP10PN	Independent/supplementary prescribers.	Only items listed in the relevant formularies can be prescribed on this prescription.
Green WP10MDA WP10HP(AD)	Instalment dispensing prescription form.	More information can be found on our Instalment Dispensing page at: psnc.org.uk/mda

For information relating to prescription charges, refer to the patient charges page on our website at: psnc.org.uk/charges

For guidance on prescribing formularies, refer to our webpage at: psnc.org.uk/prescribing

How long is a prescription valid for?

The table below summarises the length of validity of the different types of NHS prescription.

Type of prescription	1st issue expiry	Subsequent issues expiry
FP10 (excluding requests for Schedule 1, 2, 3 or 4 CDs)	6 months*	12 months for repeatable prescriptions.
FP10 for Schedule 1, 2 or 3 CDs	28 days*	N/A (cannot be on repeatable prescriptions)
FP10 for Schedule 4 CDs	28 days*	12 months for repeatable prescriptions.
FP10MDA prescription	28 days*	In accordance with instalment directions. A prescriber can request up to 14 days' supply.

*from the 'appropriate date' (either the date the prescription was signed or the date indicated as the start date)

Owings

The owing balance on prescriptions for Schedule 5 Controlled Drugs (CDs) and other medicines that are not CDs cannot be collected more than 6 months after the appropriate date. The exception is for owings against repeatable prescriptions (which have a maximum validity of 12 months).

For prescriptions requesting Schedule 1, 2, 3 or 4 CDs, owings cannot be dispensed later than 28 days after the appropriate date on the prescription. It is good practice for the pharmacist to make the patient or their representative aware at the outset that they will not be able to collect the balance after the 28 day period has elapsed.

Also, it is important to note that owings are not appropriate for CDs which are being supplied in instalments, as the quantity of the instalment dispensed must be exactly as specified on the prescription. Any missed instalments can only be given on the following day if the prescriber has specified this is permissible.

Bulk prescriptions

Part VIII A, Notes, Paragraph 9 of the Drug Tariff outlines the arrangements for bulk prescriptions:

A "Bulk" prescription is an order for two or more patients, bearing the name of a school or institution in which at least 20 persons normally reside, for the treatment of at least 10 of whom a particular doctor is responsible. Such a prescription must be an order for a drug which is prescribable under the NHS and which is not designated "Prescription Only Medicine" (POM) under Section 58(1) of the Medicines Act 1968, or for a prescribable dressing which does not contain a product which is designated POM.

No prescription charge is payable when a bulk prescription is dispensed.

FAQ

Q. Is it legal for a GP to post-date prescriptions, say for three or six months, for a patient to retain and get dispensed when required?

A. Yes. According to The Prescription Only Medicines (Human Use) Order 1997, a prescription must be endorsed with an appropriate date, defined as '...the date on which it was signed by the appropriate practitioner giving it or a date indicated by him as being the date before which it shall not be dispensed (15. (4) (a)).'

However, pharmacy teams may wish to suggest the GP considers using repeat prescriptions instead. Repeat prescriptions enable the pharmacist to make checks on whether the continued medication is appropriate for the patient, and are generally the preferred method.

Dispensing factsheets

You may have noticed that since last year we have been publishing one new dispensing related factsheet every month in our CPN magazine. What you might not know is that they are now all available to download from our website.

Previous factsheets have covered such topics as:

- Unlicensed specials and imports;
- Charges and exemptions;
- Using the Drug Tariff; and
- Where to obtain external resources.



If you missed any of these factsheets, or want additional copies, download them now at: tinyurl.com/d-sbriefings