

# Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD)

## Dispenser quick guide

October 2016

**Information and technology**  
**for better health and care**

# Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD)

## Dispenser\* quick guide

\* Throughout this toolkit, the term dispenser or dispensary refers to dispensing appliance contractors, pharmacies and dispensing staff.

### What is eRD?

eRD allows the prescriber to authorise and issue a batch of prescriptions for up to 12 months with just one digital signature. Once the service is set up, the patient's nominated dispenser receives the issues at intervals specified by the prescriber.

Patients will benefit from regular contact with their dispenser, who will be responsible for checking that their circumstances haven't changed since the previous issue of the prescription was collected. Dispensers will also ask whether the patient needs all of the items on their prescription, in order to avoid medicine wastage. eRD requires the dispenser to ask the following questions each time an issue of the eRD prescription is dispensed:

- Have you seen any health professional (GP, nurse or hospital doctor) since your last repeat was supplied?
- Have you recently started taking any new medicines - either on prescription or that you have bought over the counter?
- Have you been having any problems with your medication or experiencing any side effects?
- Are there any items on your repeat prescription that you don't need this month?

Based on the patients' answers to these questions, the dispenser will make a clinical decision to either dispense the medication or refer the patient back to their prescriber. If a patient does not require an item, the dispenser will mark it as "Not Dispensed".

### The benefits of eRD for dispensers

- improved stock control – the issues of an eRD prescription are downloaded 7 days before they are due - allowing time to order and prepare the prescription
- increased efficiency and more predictable workload
- reduced time spent collecting paper prescriptions from prescribing sites
- dispensers use their clinical skills to manage eRD prescriptions, which helps to enhance their professional long-term relationship with patients and prescribers
- no need to retain and store paper issues
- electronic reimbursement reduces the workload at the end of the month

- prescriptions are automatically cancelled when the Personal Demographics Service (PDS) is updated with notification of a death.

## How eRD works

eRD stores all of the issues of the eRD prescriptions securely on the NHS Spine and delivers them to the patient's nominated dispenser at the regular intervals set by the prescriber. The prescriber retains the ability to change or cancel the prescription at any time.

The first issue is available on the NHS Spine as soon as it is signed and the subsequent issues are delivered to the pharmacy 7 days before their due date, (provided the dispense notification for the previous issue has been sent), to allow time to order in stock and prepare the prescription.

## Cancellation and prescription synching

eRD allows the cancellation of the whole prescription or individual items. Cancelling an item will also cancel the items from all future issues of that prescription.

If the prescription is already with the dispenser, it must be returned to the Spine for the cancellation to take place. The amended eRD prescription can then be manually downloaded by the pharmacy.

## The facts about eRD

- Schedule 5 and prescription only medication must be dispensed for the first time within six months of the effective date of the prescription and continues to be valid according to the directions on the prescription for a maximum period of 12 months. For Schedule 4 Controlled Drugs, the first issue must be dispensed within 28 days of the effective date.
- In addition to the fees and allowances which are claimed and reimbursed for dispensing each individual issue of the eRD prescription, dispensers receive a repeat dispensing annual payment of £1,500 (£125 per month). This payment is made to contractors automatically by the Pricing Authority every month, whether they have supplied repeat dispensing items or not.
- Electronic claims can be submitted after a Dispense Notification has been sent for each issue of an eRD prescription. There is no need to wait until the final issue.
- If it is clinically appropriate, subsequent issues of the prescription can be manually downloaded from the Spine and dispensed in advance of the due date. This could be useful, for example, when patients are going on holiday.

eRD is an essential service and is part of the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework. The service specification requires a contractor to ensure that dispensers are competent to provide repeat dispensing services. Dispensers should also undergo appropriate training, for example, The Centre for Postgraduate Pharmacy Education (CPPE)

programme and assessment. The CPPE produces an [open learning pack](#) on repeat dispensing.

For general eRD queries and support, call the eRD Team at NHS Digital on 0113 397 3858  
NHS Digital EPS website [www.digital.nhs.uk/eps](http://www.digital.nhs.uk/eps)