

Real Time Exemption Checking (RTEC) FAQsheet

This factsheet answers your frequently asked questions relating to RTEC.

Q. My system does not display the exemption category for prescriptions identified as exempt. Is that right?

Yes, this is how RTEC is expected to work. When you use RTEC, your Patient Medical Record (PMR) system should confirm an RTEC exemption is present ('RTEC yes') or determine 'RTEC status unknown'. If the system flags 'RTEC unknown' your team can use the non-RTEC process (as was used before your PMR had the RTEC feature) because an NHSBSA exemption could not be found during the PMR's RTEC check. The patient may complete the EPS token reverse as usual, if needed.

Q. Do I need to submit EPS tokens for prescriptions with an RTEC exemption?

No. The PMR system can apply the RTEC information into the EPS prescription message and those tokens won't need to be posted to NHSBSA for exemption related reasons.

Q. Does RTEC pick up exemptions relating to Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) exemptions e.g. income allowance etc?

Yes. RTEC has been rolled out in phases. PMR systems and NHSBSA have worked to rollout RTEC for pharmacy contractors so that the RTEC system can check for NHSBSA exemptions. The subsequent phase has involved the suppliers, NHSBSA and the DWP, jointly working so that most pharmacy contractors receive RTEC DWP from their system supplier.

Q. Our PMR system performs the RTEC check earlier during the dispensing process and 'RTEC yes' was confirmed on the prescription? Is there a need to check later if there is a gap between dispensing and supply?

No. There is no requirement to check a prescription twice, i.e. a second time after RTEC was applied onto the prescription. (See also the next three questions.) If needed, you may inform the patient that an RTEC check was performed earlier during the dispensing process which 'stamped' the prescription as exempt.

Q. The patient believes they need to pay the patient prescription charge, but our PMR system's RTEC has stamped the prescription 'exempt'. What should I do?

Those prescriptions stamped 'exempt' by the RTEC will be treated as exempt by NHSBSA regardless of the information written onto the paper EPS token. There is no need for the pharmacy team to collect a prescription charge from this patient.

Q. Could a patient receive a penalty notice charge if their prescription was stamped 'RTEC yes' during the RTEC check and the EPS prescription is submitted to NHSBSA?

No. Those prescriptions stamped exempt by the RTEC check do not require investigation for potential charge notices.

Q. My PMR system performed the RTEC check during the dispensing process and originally found 'RTEC unknown', but the patient now explains they have recently become exempt (e.g. the patient has explained they have just purchased a relevant certificate or they have reached 60 years old)?

There is ability to re-perform (or override) the RTEC check so that the patient can re-confirm their status. The override option is intended for infrequent scenarios e.g. if 'RTEC unknown' was originally flagged but the patient has since become exempt. As mentioned elsewhere within this factsheet, there is no requirement to perform an override if the prescription is already stamped as 'RTEC yes'.

Q. The patient says that RTEC system should be identifying an NHSBSA exemption category (e.g. pre-payment certificate) but the RTEC system is not finding an exemption?

This can occur if the exemption may no longer be in place or if there is a mismatch between databases e.g. if the patient's address at the GP practice and their address within NHSBSA records is different, or if there is a name mismatch between various NHS records.

The NHSBSA's RTEC patient-facing and pharmacy materials explain that for patients to make use of RTEC, patients need to ensure that their address at the GP practice and their address held by the NHSBSA is aligned. To benefit from using the RTEC system, patients who move address should:

- contact their GP practice to correct their address information; and
- contact NHSBSA to correct their address information ([NHSBSA's 'contact us' webpage](#)).

The [prescription charge refund \(FP57 form\) procedure](#) can apply in scenarios such as where:

- the patient (or representative) requests a refund form;
- the patient (or representative) is unsure whether they are entitled to free prescriptions; or
- the patient (or representative) has applied or will be applying for a prescription charge exemption certificate or prepayment certificate.

Read more at: psnc.org.uk/rtec.