

Guidance on changes to prescription sorting and submission requirements

In this factsheet PSNC's Dispensing and Supply Team highlight the recent changes to prescription sorting and submission requirements.

What changes have been made to prescription sorting requirements?

Each month contractors are required to sort their prescriptions for submission to the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) as per the guidance outlined in the FP34C submission form. Following representations made by PSNC, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have agreed to relax the end of month prescription sorting requirements by removing the need for contractors to sort FP10 forms by prescriber surname/type or by form type (FP10SS PN/SP/HP and FP10D).

Additionally, changes have also been made to the inclusion criteria for red separators with the addition of **Bulk prescriptions for schools or institutions and paper FP10 or FP10MDA prescriptions issued to prisoners on release by Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMP)** to the list of forms/items to be included in the red separator for exempt prescriptions for end of month submission. These changes to sorting requirements apply to prescriptions submitted for payment from **November 2021** (for prescriptions dispensed in October 2021) onwards.

What are the prescription sorting requirements?

The guidance included with the FP34C submission form outlines the sorting and submission requirements for monthly paper prescriptions submitted for payment to the NHSBSA. From November 2021 (for prescriptions dispensed in October 2021), pharmacy staff involved in end of month submission process will continue to be required to sort prescription forms into relevant exempt or paid groups (current rate and old charge rates) and use red separators for forms which include specified items before the prescription bundle is submitted for payment to the NHSBSA. The recommended order for sorting of prescriptions is outlined below.

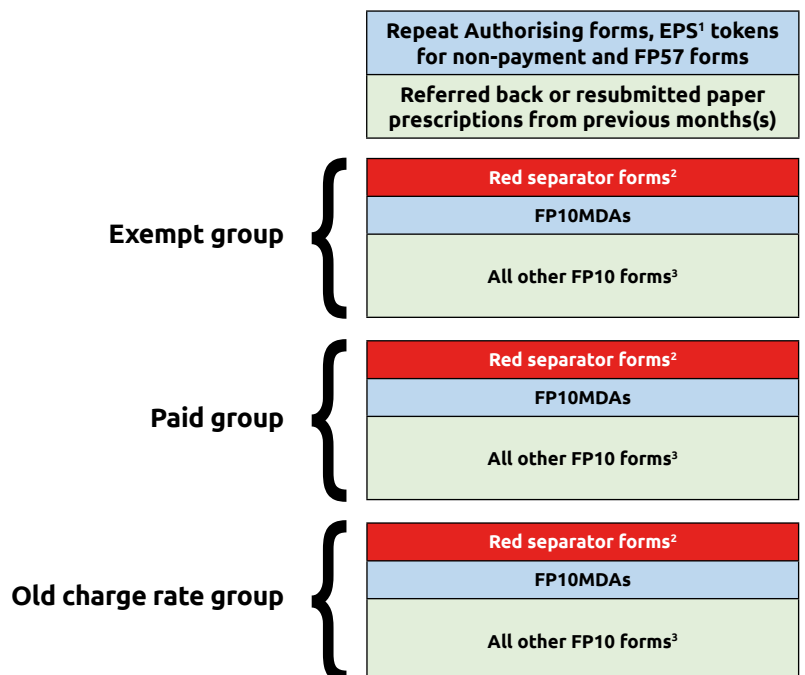
- **EPS tokens for non-payment, FP57 forms and paper Repeat Authorising (RA) forms**
- **Resubmitted forms from previous month(s)**
- **Red separator forms** (includes the newly added Bulk and HMP Service-issued prescriptions)
- **FP10MDA instalment dispensing forms** (where possible sorted open and flat)
- **All other FP10 forms** (sorting no longer required by form type (FP10SS PN/SP/HP and FP10D) or by prescriber surname)

Image shows the correct prescription bundle sorting requirements to follow from November 2021 (for prescriptions dispensed in October 2021)

1. Unless an automatic exemption applies, it is a condition of entitlement to exemption from prescription charges that the patient or their representative claiming exemption must make and duly complete a declaration of entitlement on the EPS token. Each month, contractors must submit tokens for electronic prescriptions (except those for age exempt patients, prescriptions where only free-of-charge (FOC) items are prescribed and where Real Time Exemption Checking (RTEC) confirms an exemption). Tokens must be sorted separately from FP10 paper prescriptions and dispatched with the prescription bundle no later than the 5th of the month following that in which supply was made. Where submitted, the EPS tokens must relate to the same the dispensing month in which the associated electronic prescriptions are submitted for payment to the NHSBSA

2. See PSNC's Red Separator factsheet for guidance on which forms are required to be placed in the red separators

3. Contractors are no longer required to sort other FP10 prescriptions by form type (FP10SS PN/SP/HP and FP10D) or by prescriber name/type





Prescription submission requirements

The completed FP34C submission document (printed from the MYS portal) must be enclosed with the monthly prescription bundle to be dispatched no later than the 5th day of the month following that in which supply was made using a secure track and trace method. In months where one or more bank holiday occurs during the first five days of the month, contractors will be given an extra day to submit their FP34C and dispatch their prescription bundle to the NHSBSA. For more information on submission and timing of advance payments see our [PSNC Briefing 032/21](#): New payment arrangements for ALL contractors following end to Pharmacy Earlier Payment Scheme (PEPS)

Why have these changes been made to prescription sorting requirements?

With EPS now representing **over 95%** of all prescriptions dispensed by community pharmacies in England, the prescription sorting requirements have been reviewed to reflect the very low volumes of paper prescriptions dispensed by pharmacy contractors. The changes to sorting requirements may help to reduce some of the administrative burden placed on pharmacy staff involved in the end of month submission processes.

People who have just been released from prison do not have to pay for NHS prescriptions. Additionally, prescription charges are also not payable in respect on Bulk prescriptions issued for schools or institutions. However, there is no specific exemption declaration for patients or their representatives to select on the reverse of paper prescription forms to declare an exemption reason for Bulk or HMP Service-issued prescriptions. The changes to red separator requirements will help to ensure that Bulk and HMP Service-issued prescriptions are subjected to additional checks by operators at the NHSBSA to avoid the risk of contractors having any incorrect prescription charge deductions applied to any items issued on these forms. [Click here](#) for a full list of all the prescriptions forms to be included in the red separators for end of month submission.

Helpful tips for end of month submission process

- Contractors must take extra care when completing their total figures of forms and items for exempt and paid electronic and paper prescriptions, and the combined totals, to ensure it is entered and declared correctly. The information contained within this section is used by NHSBSA to calculate the monthly advance payment.
- Ensure all prescriptions are filed in the correct patient charge group – i.e. exempt, paid, old rate paid.
- Double check prescription endorsements for any:
 - expensive items (it is advisable to keep a record/copy of any dispensed paper prescriptions for high value items to reconcile against the Schedule of Payments);
 - unlicensed specials/imports;
 - Broken Bulk (BB) claims; and
 - Out of pocket Expenses (OOP).
- Do not submit paper prescriptions with labels, sticky notes, pins, staples, paper clips attached as this can affect the scanning process.
- Where required, endorse paper prescriptions clearly to the left-hand side margin of the prescription form. Avoid any marks or endorsements in the prescribing area of the form as this may affect pricing of a prescription.
- Pharmacy stamp must not obscure the patient details, prescribed items or endorsements.
- Endorse 'ND' against any item not dispensed and strike through the item with a horizontal line.
- Exemption and paid declarations on paper prescriptions must be completed in full (see page on [Exemptions from the prescription charge](#)) and forms placed in the correct groups to avoid prescriptions being switched between chargeable and exempt groups.
- Check that EPS prescriptions do not contain any supplementary product information for e.g. a particular brand or manufacturer included as part of the dosage instructions. Supplementary product information contained in the dosage area or notes section of electronic prescriptions is not read by the NHSBSA and therefore contractors will not be reimbursed for supplying in accordance with these additional instructions. If an electronic prescription annotated with additional/supplementary product information is received by a pharmacy, it is strongly recommended to have such prescriptions appropriately rewritten/re-issued by the prescriber before claiming.
- Only prescription forms meeting the red separator criteria below must be included in the relevant red separators.

Useful links

For more information see our page [Sorting your prescriptions prior to submission page](#), where you can also access our [Red separator factsheet](#).

For information on prescription exemptions see our [Dispensing Factsheet: Exemptions from the prescription charge](#)

For guidance on sorting paper prescriptions with old charge rates that meet red separator criteria see our story [Correct submission of forms and items paid at the old charge rate](#)