

To: • Community Pharmacy sites

NHS England
Wellington House
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Dear Colleagues

RE: Rollout of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) to Detained Estate services

NHS England is pleased to announce the rollout of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) to Detained Estate services in England from September 2024.

The implementation of EPS will allow To Take Out (TTO) prescriptions and urgent prescriptions to be transmitted electronically between the prescriber at site and the community pharmacy, without the need for a physical FP10 to be completed.

Most patients will be released with a supply of their medicines which they have been using whilst in prison so they may not collect the EPS prescription immediately on release. They may collect their prescription a long distance away from the prison they were released from as patients have often been living in prisons far away from their usual homes.

This rollout will significantly improve access to urgent medicines and medicines needed by released patients by:

- enabling the prescribing of discharge medicines in advance of release as part of release planning. The need to safely retain a paper prescription to provide to the patient at release has been a barrier which EPS will resolve.
- streamlining the process for discharge medicines prescribing as EPS opens more opportunities for remote prescribing and removes reliance of on-site prescribers to issue a paper FP10.
- replacing dispensing of discharge medicines which are often left behind or can't be supplied before the patient leaves.
- avoiding the need for patients to return to prison post-release to collect discharge medicines (which often remain uncollected).
- removing the issues relating to the destruction of the paper FP10 if a detainee returns to custody after a court appearance- the EPS prescription can be digitally cancelled.

What does this mean for Community Pharmacies?

Community pharmacies will see a minor increase in EPS prescriptions received overall, however there will be an increase in the number of non-nominated prescriptions requiring to be pulled down from the spine. Key information to support pharmacies in finding and dispensing these EPS prescriptions are:

- Due to the uncertainty of where an individual will be residing post release, the non-nomination option for prescriptions is the most effective and safe option in ensuring continuity of medicines to individuals and ease of access to their medicines.

- Some individuals may have access to a token for their prescription e.g. if it has been provided or if they have access to a digital token via NHS App or their NHS website account, however due to the challenges in patients being given this as they are released or having this when they present at the pharmacy, it's likely the patient will present at the pharmacy without it. This means the prescription will need to be found using patient identifiable information, such as the prison address from which they have just been released, their name and date of birth. This address will also confirm that the prescription is exempt from prescription charges as those with the practice address of HMP are exempt from the charges. The prescription must have 'HMP' printed in the box for the practice address at the front of the prescription form. In these instances, the patient does not need to complete a signed declaration on the back of the form. EPS exemption category 0015 is for the processing of HMP prisoners on release. On some dispensing systems this category is worded in a misleading way, for example 'patient does not have to pay a prescription charge'. Exemption category 0015 should only be used for the processing of HMP prisoners on release.
- If the pharmacist needs to contact the prison prescriber, they can do this by [looking up the prison](#), contacting the main switchboard and asking to be put through to the healthcare team. These teams normally operate core hours between 08.00 and 17.00 Monday to Friday with some teams available outside these core hours.
- Community pharmacies will need to dispense the medication for the individual whilst they wait (if it is in stock), as there will not be the opportunity to prepare the medication in advance of the individual arriving at the pharmacy due to the non-nomination status of the prescription.

Implementation Plans

Implementation of EPS will be completed on a phased basis starting with two pilot sites in September 2024, followed by a further five sites in November 2024. Learnings from the first users will help inform the further rollout and guidance. Rollout will then be on a regional basis between November 2024 and March 2025 (dates could be subject to change).

Contact details

If you would like more information about the project or have any questions, please contact us at: necsu.hjis@nhs.net.