

## 1: Repeat dispensing

### 1.1 Service summary

The aim of the repeat dispensing ('batch prescription') service is to allow patients to collect their repeat medication directly from the pharmacy for a period specified by the prescriber without having to reorder from the surgery every month. Patients find it convenient as they don't need to contact the surgery until the prescription is due for review, unless their condition changes. Once the service is set up, workload for the surgery is reduced as up to one year's worth of prescriptions can be issued in one transaction. The Electronic Prescription Service supports Repeat Dispensing and, as unused prescriptions can be cancelled by the prescriber, means that even those whose prescriptions are subject to frequent change can be included. Pharmacy staff are contractually required to make some checks each time an instalment is requested, and to inform the prescriber of any clinically significant issues.

### 1.2 Getting the most from the service

#### Setting up the service

- Talk through the process amongst the relevant staff and agree how it will be handled. Consider
  - patient selection criteria
  - prescription duration
  - the procedure for communicating with the pharmacy when an existing prescription is changed – good communication between pharmacy and surgery is essential particularly when using paper prescriptions. EPS allows more flexibility.
  - the procedure for prescribing 'PRN' medications
- Your local pharmacies may be able to help you identify suitable patients
- Give patients a copy of leaflet RD2 (Repeat Dispensing), and for those who are going to participate, get them to complete a consent form RD1 (available from NHS England Area Team)
- Make sure all staff know how to use the batch prescription function on your clinical system

#### Patient selection

- The service is most suitable for patients on regular, stable medication regimes whom you usually see once or twice a year in connection with their long term condition.
- Patients who stop and start medication, or whose medication is changed frequently, are less likely to benefit although the process of changing repeatable prescriptions is easier with EPS.
- Medicines which are not used at a constant rate (eg inhalers, pain relief, emollients) are less suitable for repeat dispensing, although they could be prescribed on a separate Repeat Dispensing form

### 1.3 For more information

See '[Dispensing with Repeats](#)', A Practical Guide to Repeat Dispensing NPC 2008 and [Repeat Dispensing and Repeat Prescribing](#) (PSNC briefing January 2014)

From the Mid Essex CCG Medicines Standards:

- The NHS Repeat Dispensing service, using batch prescriptions, is available from all community pharmacies and will be used by GP practices in preference to repeat prescribing whenever appropriate.
- Prescribers will leave the dispensing interval blank unless there are clinical reasons why it should be used (if a dispensing interval is entered the pharmacy contractor and the patient have no flexibility in the date of subsequent supplies)
- Practices will have a procedure for managing changes to a current prescription, to include communication with the community pharmacy that holds the Repeat Authorisation.