

4. Pharmacy managed repeat prescription services

4.1. Service Summary

A pharmacy managed repeat service involves pharmacy staff in ordering the prescription on behalf of the patient. Patients are typically asked at the time of collecting their prescription what they will need next time, but some pharmacies do contact the patient just before putting in the request. This is not an NHS service and is not provided by all pharmacy contractors.

The service provides regular and timely ordering of medication, even for patients who may have difficulty in managing the ordering process themselves. It enables the pharmacy workload to be managed, with medicines ordered in advance of the patient arriving to collect, and it is convenient for patients and carers.

Ordering up to one month in advance can mean that patients order everything as they don't know what they will need, and neither practice nor pharmacy staff always check that everything is needed.

4.2. Getting the most from the service

Many of these points apply to repeat prescribing generally:

- Keep repeat prescription lists up to date on the clinical system, to reduce the possibility of the patient being able to order something that has been discontinued
- Keeping prescriptions 'synchronised', for example prescribing new medicines to run out at the same time as existing repeats, helps patients to maintain a regular ordering pattern and can prevent waste
- Be aware that patients don't need everything every month – don't prescribe items that haven't been ordered just because you think they ought to have them
- Reassure patients that not ordering something one month doesn't mean they can't have it again in future
- Be alert to requests for duplicate prescriptions – the patient may order something directly as well as asking the pharmacy to do it
- Take extra care when prescribing after a hospital discharge – the prescription may have changed

4.3. For more information

From NHS Mid Essex Medicine Standards 2012:

- Managed repeat prescription services (pharmacy contractors)
- Pharmacy and appliance contractors providing this service will have a Standard Operating Procedure in place
- The contractor will have a record of the patient's request to be part of the service
- Requests for repeat prescriptions will be made at the explicit request of the patient or their representative. The contractor may operate a reminder system but will not request a prescription from the patient's surgery without their consent on each occasion
- Each time a prescription is requested, pharmacy staff will establish with the patient or their representative which items are needed on that occasion, and ensure that items which are not needed are not included on the request
- Pharmacy staff will check again on collection whether everything is needed on that occasion.
- Unwanted items will be marked 'not dispensed' and returned to stock as appropriate
- Pharmacists will notify the prescriber of items which should no longer be on the repeat prescription list
- The patient will be given their most recent repeat request form, including any communication from their surgery (or be provided with a copy)