

NHS Digital's work to support the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic includes work across several EPS-related projects. Below is some information and key messages for prescribers.

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Guidance for Prescribers Using EPS Remotely

Many GPs and other prescribers in general practices are now using EPS during remote consultations with patients as a result of the pandemic. NHS Digital has therefore updated its [guidance for use of EPS within remote consultations](#).

The guidance is for EPS prescribers and pharmacy teams. The guidance notes that:

- Nominations should still continue to be used wherever possible.
- Phase 4 (non-nominated) prescriptions should only be used if other options are not suitable.

One-off nomination is an additional, and preferred, alternative to use instead of Phase 4. It is currently only available within the TPP SystemOne GP system, but EMIS plans to add this functionality to their EPS prescribing systems in the future.

For [EPS Phase 4](#) prescribing, if the patient cannot be given the printed Phase 4 token, other information should be provided to them instead. Ideally the Prescription ID should be provided where possible. Some GP practices can copy this and send it by email or text message to the patient using their clinical system.

See example below from a Leeds GP practice

If no nominated pharmacy, you can still issue electronically and just give your patient the token number. To copy barcode – after issuing, go to Prescription History, click on the relevant FP10, highlight ETP barcode in the right-hand pane.

TEXT MESSAGE TO PATIENT – INSERT TOKEN NUMBER (HOW TO ABOVE)

“Dear patient

Prescription code:

Your prescription has been issued electronically. To collect your medication please provide this code to any community pharmacy in England. To change an existing pharmacy nomination please download the NHS App or login via SystemOnline if already registered.”

If pharmacy teams receive the Prescription ID from the patient, it can be used to pull down the prescription onto the pharmacy PMR system. As a last resort, the EPS Tracker may be used within the pharmacy to locate an EPS prescription (e.g. via use of the NHS number) but it should be noted that this is not an efficient way for a pharmacy to locate a prescription.

Urgent Prescriptions

Due to the nature of prescriptions issued in urgent care, prescribers are advised contact pharmacies to notify them that they are issuing an EPS prescription which needs to be dispensed promptly. There is no way of communicating clinical urgency between prescriber and pharmacy staff at the time the prescription is downloaded from the spine. It is the responsibility of the prescriber to verbally inform the pharmacy of urgent prescriptions to the pharmacy. This advice has been issued following previous serious incidents and this NHS Digital response: <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2017-0290-Response-by-NHS-Digital.pdf>.

Calling the pharmacy to notify them of an urgent prescription will also help manage any risk where a temporary pharmacy closure has occurred during the pandemic.

ETP Prescriptions for Injections (e.g. End of Life)

Please check that personally administered (PA) is not ticked on the template or the drugs can't be sent via ETP.

Top tip: To manage stock issues please send each palliative care drug on a separate prescription so they can be easily redirected to another pharmacy. Contact the pharmacy to inform them of how many items have been issued for the patient to ensure that

Other Details... Exact date & time Tue 28 Jan 2020 09:34 X

Changing the consultation date will affect all other data entered. To avoid this, cancel and press the 'Next' button [Hide Warning](#)

Medication start Tue 28 Jan 2020

Drug prescribed Morphine sulfate 1mg/1ml solution for injection ampoules CD 288 i Pers. Admin

Script type NHS Issue Private Issue Instalment Dispensed Issue

Dose use as directed Times & Doses

Total quantity Number 1 millilitres = 1 ampoule Packs Free Text

Script notes Presets

Administrative notes [Batch Number] [Pack Size] Presets

Issue duration 1 Days End date 29 Jan 2020

You are using the issue duration/quantity calculator, you should check that it produces the required duration and quantity before proceeding. i

Automatically create a Repeat Template based on this issue

Patient-Specific Warnings

Sensitivities (not checked):

- ! Drug interaction (Advised to stop statin whilst on this medication)
- ! Drug interaction (Advised to stop statin whilst on this medication)
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Continuation of Phase 4 Roll-out

- TPP SystemOne GP system – their national roll-out continues with many hundreds of GP practices now live, and many more sites due to go-live in the coming weeks and months.
- EMIS – the pace of the Phase 4 roll-out has been increased across its GP practice users.
- Microtest and Vision are currently piloting Phase 4 with some of their general practice users.
- EPS started being used by urgent care prescribers in 2018 and it is available within the following urgent care prescribing systems; Advanced Adastra prescribing system, IC24, EMIS Web, TPP systems. NHS Digital is now working with EMIS and TPP so that EPS is an option for prescribers to use in extended access hubs, community, out of hours and urgent care settings.

Around a quarter of GP practices have systems which can send Phase 4 prescriptions.

One-off Nomination Feature Within GP Systems

During April 2020 TPP SystmOne piloted and rolled out a one-off EPS nomination feature for their prescribers. This feature has been requested for those scenarios such as:

- During emergencies where a pharmacy is going through a temporary closure.
- For those patients who are not ready to commit to a nomination but would like a one-off nomination instead of a Phase 4 prescription.
- When the patient is on holiday and cannot use their regular nominated pharmacy.

EMIS are working on the development of the feature. Other prescribing system suppliers may consider piloting and rolling out the feature in future.

Improve Use of ETP (Tips shared from Bradford CCG)

For those unfamiliar with setting up of ETP – NHS digital tips are available here and this includes how to cancel prescriptions:

- Before prescribing, always select the item that looks like it is properly formatted and does not have Non-ETP product (not DM-D mapped) at the end as this indicates it's not ETP compliant.
- When prescribing injections or items that would normally require some form of administration – UNTICK the "Pers Admin" box to the right-hand side of the acute medication dialogue box. This will allow for the item to go via ETP.
- Many issues relate to prescribing of controlled drugs, use an approved formulary will help with this. Please check quantities being prescribed are also appropriate.
- Have you checked all appropriate patients are on eRD (electronic repeat prescriptions)?
- Script issue lengths / early issues - Stick to normal prescription length.