

Reporting Suspicious Patient Nomination Changes – Guidance for Pharmacy Contractors

The NHS Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) allows patients in England to choose a preferred pharmacy, to which their prescriptions can be sent to electronically, and from where they can then collect their medication. As pharmacy contractors, you play a vital role in protecting patients' rights and maintaining the integrity of the NHS Electronic Prescription Service (EPS). Unauthorised changes to a patient's nominated pharmacy can disrupt their care, send prescriptions to the wrong pharmacy, and breach patient consent requirements set out by the Terms of Service in the NHS Pharmaceutical Services Regulations.

Patients must be free to choose their nominated pharmacy. They must not be influenced, persuaded, or incentivised to nominate a specific pharmacy. Information received suggesting that these principles have been disregarded may be reported to the GPhC and treated as misconduct for the purposes of fitness to practise.

If you suspect that another pharmacy has changed a patient's nomination without their consent, please follow the process below.

How to report a suspected unauthorised nomination change

- Ask the patient or their carer to raise the issue with the pharmacy that changed the nomination and, if no satisfactory conclusion reached, the patient should complain directly to Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) wyicb.pals@nhs.net - [Comments, concerns and complaints :: West Yorkshire Health & Care Partnership](#)
- **Primary Care Team action** - The team can request a nomination report from NHS Digital showing who made the change, when and where it occurred, allowing them to investigate and confirm whether proper consent was obtained.
- **Escalation and next steps** - If, following investigation, there is evidence that a pharmacy has changed nominations without consent, or has influenced, persuaded, or incentivised patients to nominate them, the ICB Primary Care Team may take contractual action and may also escalate the case to the GPhC as a potential fitness to practise concern.
- **Cooperate with follow-up-** You may be asked for further information to support the investigation. Keep a clear record of all communications.

To support pharmacy teams, a printable version of the [guidance](#) for display in the dispensary and a [Log Form](#) to aid with information gathering have been produced.

Good practice reminders

- Make sure all staff know that changing a nomination must be done with the patient's informed consent.
- Always record evidence of patient consent when changing nominations, for each and every change to a nomination.
- Patients must make their own choice of nominated pharmacy—without any pressure or incentives.
- Report any suspected unauthorised changes promptly to protect both patients and the EPS system.
- Information suggesting unethical nomination practices may be escalated to the GPhC as potential misconduct.

As a reminder the 'article' which details pharmacies obligations is:

*"Patients must be fully informed about EPS before their nomination is set up and any changes to nominations must only be done at the request of the patient and **an audit trail of the request is strongly advised.**"*

Community Pharmacy England (CPE) have developed 4 guiding principles in relation to patient nominations in which all pharmacy teams should understand and adhere to protect patient choice. These are as follows:

- *Plan how EPS works.*
- *Don't influence the patient.*
- *Update nomination details as soon as possible.*
- *Create a standard operating procedure."*

Please ensure that all members of staff are aware of the above and the consequences of switching nominations without a patient's consent. Further guidance on the above principles can be found by following the links below.

- [We're all community pharmacy \(cpe.org.uk\)](http://cpe.org.uk)
- [Nomination - what you need to know-NHS-Digital-NHS-England-branded.pdf \(cpe.org.uk\)](http://cpe.org.uk/Nomination%20-%20what%20you%20need%20to%20know-NHS-Digital-NHS-England-branded.pdf)