

Communications toolkit

Patient led repeat prescription ordering – including promotion of the NHS App

Introduction

The way repeat prescriptions are ordered is changing. Soon all patients (who are able to do so) will be able to request their own medication directly from their GP practice. This will mean that for the majority of patients, the pharmacy will no longer order prescriptions on their behalf.

Patients will be able to order repeat medication in one of the following ways:

- Online via the GP practice online ordering process or the NHS App – this is the safest and easiest way
- Via the repeat prescription box at the GP practice
- Via post to the GP practice using the repeat prescription slip

Practices will set their own date for this change in conjunction with their local community pharmacies to ensure appropriate measures are in place to manage this process. Patients who already take their repeat prescription request slips into the GP practice or order their repeat medication online are not affected.

The exception will be patients who are unable to order their medication by any of the recommended routes. GPs will work closely with pharmacies to ensure patients who require additional assistance (Assisted Patients) get special care and specific policies geared to their personal needs. This could mean that pharmacies continue to order on behalf of some patients, where all partners agree this is the best solution for a particular individual.

This change aims to:

- Reduce medicine waste. Current arrangements mean that many medicines are routinely ordered but not needed.
- Give patients better control over the ordering of their own medication.
- Improve safety by avoiding stockpiling of medication and prevent medication that has been stopped from being re-ordered by mistake.
- Save practice time (especially if prescriptions are ordered online) with less time spent chasing and processing prescriptions and answering the phone to queries and complaints.

Communications aims and objectives

- Raise awareness of an upcoming change to medicine ordering and ensure patients are prepared.
- Raise awareness of the benefits of online ordering of medicines

- Encourage more patients to download and use the NHS App – especially when ordering repeat prescriptions

Key messages

- The way repeat prescriptions are ordered is changing.
- All patients (who are able to do so) are able to request their own medication directly from their GP practice. Ordering online is the safest and easiest way to do this.
- Soon the majority of patients will no longer be able to order regular medicines on repeat prescription from their local pharmacy.
- Ordering your own prescriptions puts you in control. By only ordering the medicines you need, you can help to reduce waste and save money that can be spent on other NHS services.
- It's best to order your repeat prescription 7 days in advance. Don't wait until you're just about to run out! It can take time for your request to be approved by your GP practice - especially when they're busy.
- Your GP practice will let you know when changes to the ordering of repeat prescriptions are being introduced at your practice. Look out for a text, email or letter with further details. Your practice will begin telling patients about these changes up to 12 weeks before they are planned to come into effect. So, you will have time to ask questions and consider the best way to order your repeat prescriptions in the future.
- The safest and easiest way to request regular medicines on repeat prescription is online via the NHS App, or another online platform used by your GP practice. However, if you are unable to do this you can fill in the slip at the bottom of your prescription and take it to your GP practice.
- You can order repeat prescriptions quickly and easily online via the NHS App. It can be downloaded to your mobile phone via the Apple App Store or Google Play.
- If you don't want to download an app to your phone, or would rather use a PC, you can set up an NHS account and log in via the website: www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/account/. You can order repeat prescriptions online in just the same way.
- If you already order your repeat prescriptions online, via the NHS App or another online platform used by your GP practice, these changes will not affect you.

- Take control of your repeat prescriptions – go online! It's quicker, easier, there's less waste, and you're dealing directly with your GP practice so it's less hassle if there's a problem.
- Some patients may struggle to order their own prescriptions and need additional assistance. GP practices, pharmacies and carers will work together to find an approach that best meets the needs of the patient. In some cases, this may mean that the pharmacy continues to order on the patient's behalf.
- If you would like to order your repeat prescriptions online but you're struggling to set up the NHS App, you can contact your GP practice or local pharmacy for advice and support.
- The NHS App allows you to access a range of NHS services. You can book and manage appointments, view your GP health record, find your NHS number – and more.

Available materials / assets

NHS Greater Manchester has produced two videos.

The first is an NHS App step by step user guide that explain how to download the app, set up an account and order a prescription. You can watch it here: https://youtu.be/f_rXF1GbOYE.

The second video features patients, a GP, a pharmacist and community digital facilitators talking about the benefits of using the App, including sharing their own experiences. You can watch it here: <https://youtu.be/Ytv0xlvnC8Y>.

NHS England has developed a range of promotional materials and digital assets:

- Patient leaflets and posters
- Images for the web and digital displays
- Images for social media
- Message templates and website text for practices

They can be downloaded from the [NHS Digital website](#).

How you can get involved

- Use the videos and social media assets to schedule posts on your channels

- Promote the campaign using the suggested copy for your newsletters
- Share this toolkit with partner organisations and with your stakeholder lists

Sample copy - newsletters

The way repeat prescriptions are ordered is changing. All patients (who are able to do so) are able to request their own medication directly from their GP practice – instead of your local pharmacy doing this for you.

Ordering online is the safest and easiest way to order your regular medicines. You can do this via the NHS App, or another online platform used by your GP practice. The NHS App can be downloaded for free to your mobile phone via the Apple App Store or Google Play. You can find out more about the app at www.nhs.uk/nhs-app. Alternatively, you can set up an NHS account and log in at www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/account if you do not have a smartphone, or would prefer not to download an app. If you're not able to order online, you can fill in the slip at the bottom of your paper prescription and take it to your GP practice.

Ordering your own prescriptions puts you in control. By only ordering the medicines you need, you can help to reduce waste and save money that can be spent on other NHS services. Plus, it's quicker and easier to sort out any problems or get an answer to any queries because you're dealing directly with your GP practice.

The date when these changes come into effect will vary between GP practices. Your practice will tell you at least 12 weeks in advance, so look out for a text, email or letter with further details. This means you will have plenty of time to set up online prescription ordering or to talk through any concerns you may have with your practice.

We know that some patients may struggle to order their own repeat prescriptions. GP practices, pharmacies and carers will work together to find an approach that best meets the needs of the patient. In some cases, this may mean that the pharmacy continues to order on the patient's behalf, or the patient can consent to someone accessing online services as their nominated representative.

If you would like to order your repeat prescriptions online but you're struggling to set up the NHS App, you can contact your GP practice or local pharmacy for advice and support.

What do I do now?

- Look out for communications from your GP practice with a 'go live' date for changes to repeat prescription ordering.
- Download the NHS App and set up online prescription ordering.
- Make sure your GP practice is aware, if you, or someone you care about, may struggle to order their own prescriptions. They may be able to help you go online and get used to the NHS App or put other arrangements in place, if needed.

If you already order your repeat prescriptions online, via the NHS App or another online platform used by your GP practice, these changes will not affect you.


Text messages from GP practice




From [add date] most patients will need to order their repeat prescription directly from the practice – not via a local pharmacy. The safest and quickest way to do this is online using [name of online platform used by practice if relevant] or the NHS App. Find out how to get the NHS App: www.nhs.uk/nhsapp. If you think you will struggle to order your own repeat prescriptions, please notify the practice as soon as possible.

Social media posts



NHS England assets can be downloaded via this link: <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/toolkit>

Please do not use the positional images in the table, these are for reference only and not hi-resolution for using on socials.

Graphic	Long copy (Facebook & Instagram)	Short copy – up to 280 characters (Twitter)	Alt copy (image description)
	<p>All patients (who are able to do so) are able to order their own repeat prescriptions directly from their GP practice - not via a local pharmacy.</p> <p>Ordering online via the NHS App, or another online platform used by your GP practice, is the safest and easiest way to do this.</p> <p>Go to www.nhs.uk/nhs-app to find out more.</p>	<p>All patients (who are able to do so) are able to order their own repeat prescriptions directly from their GP practice.</p> <p>Ordering online via the NHS App is the safest and easiest way to do this.</p> <p>Go to www.nhs.uk/nhs-app to find out more.</p>	<p>Visual contains image of a smartphone with the NHS App on the screen and three blister packs full of tablets. Text reads: Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App.</p>

<p>Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App</p> 	<p>Does a local pharmacy order your regular medicines for you?</p> <p>You are able to request your own repeat prescriptions directly from your GP practice.</p> <p>Ordering online via the NHS App, or another online platform used by your GP practice, is the quickest and easiest way to do this is.</p> <p>Find out more at nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Does a local pharmacy order your regular medicines for you?</p> <p>You are able to request your own repeat prescriptions directly from your GP practice.</p> <p>Ordering online via the NHS App is the quickest and easiest way to do this is.</p> <p>Find out more at nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Visual contains image of a smartphone with the NHS App on the screen and three blister packs full of tablets. Text reads: Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App.</p>
<p>Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App</p> 	<p>Ordering your own prescriptions puts you in control.</p> <p>By only ordering the medicines you need, you can help to reduce waste and save money that can be spent on other NHS services.</p> <p>Find out how the NHS App can help at nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Ordering your own prescriptions puts you in control.</p> <p>By only ordering the medicines you need, you can help to reduce waste and save money that can be spent on other NHS services.</p> <p>Find out how the NHS App can help at nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Visual contains image of a smartphone with the NHS App on the screen and three blister packs full of tablets. Text reads: Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App.</p>
<p>Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App</p> 	<p>All patients (who are able to do so) are able to order their own repeat prescriptions directly from their GP practice - not via their local pharmacy.</p> <p>Your GP practice will tell you when this change will come into effect for you. Look out for texts, emails or letters from your practice with more information.</p>	<p>All patients (who are able to do so) are able to order their own repeat prescriptions directly from their GP practice - not via a local pharmacy.</p> <p>Look out for more information from your GP practice.</p> <p>Find out how the NHS App can help: www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Visual contains image of a smartphone with the NHS App on the screen and three blister packs full of tablets. Text reads: Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App.</p>

	<p>Find out more about how the NHS App can help: www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>		
	<p>The safest, easiest and quickest way to request regular medicines on repeat prescription is online.</p> <p>You can use the NHS App, or another online platform used by your GP practice, to do this.</p> <p>It can be downloaded for free to your mobile phone via the Apple App Store or Google Play.</p> <p>Find out more about the NHS App at www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>The safest and easiest way to request regular medicines on repeat prescription is online.</p> <p>You can use the NHS App, or another online platform used by your GP practice.</p> <p>Find out more about the NHS App at www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Visual contains image of a smartphone with the NHS App on the screen and three blister packs full of tablets. Text reads: Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App.</p>
	<p>You can order repeat prescriptions quickly, easily and safely online via the NHS App (or another online platform used by your GP practice).</p> <p>It can be downloaded for free to your mobile phone via the Apple App Store or Google Play.</p> <p>Find out more at www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>You can order repeat prescriptions quickly, easily and safely online via the NHS App (or another online platform used by your GP practice).</p> <p>It can be downloaded for free to your mobile phone via the Apple App Store or Google Play.</p> <p>Find out more at www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Visual contains image of a smartphone with the NHS App on the screen and three blister packs full of tablets. Text reads: Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App.</p>

<p>Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App</p> 	<p>Ordering your own repeat prescriptions puts you in control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👍 You can order what you need, when you want it. 👍 It's quicker and easier 👍 There's less waste. <p>Plus you're dealing directly with your GP practice so it's less hassle to sort out any problems, or get an answer to any queries.</p> <p>Find out more about ordering your prescriptions online via the NHS App at: www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Ordering your own repeat prescriptions puts you in control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👍 Order what you need, when you want it. 👍 Quicker and easier 👍 Less waste <p>Find out more about ordering your prescriptions online via the NHS App at: www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Visual contains image of a smartphone with the NHS App on the screen and three blister packs full of tablets. Text reads: Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App.</p>
<p>Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App</p> 	<p>All patients (who are able to do so) are able to order their own repeat prescriptions directly from their GP practice.</p> <p>If you think this may be a problem for you, or someone you care about, talk to your GP practice about your concerns.</p> <p>They may be able to help you get online with the NHS App or put other arrangements in place, if needed.</p>	<p>All patients (who are able to do so) are able to order their own repeat prescriptions directly from their GP practice - not via a local pharmacy.</p> <p>If you think this may be a problem for you, or someone you care about, talk to your GP practice about your concerns.</p>	<p>Visual contains image of a smartphone with the NHS App on the screen and three blister packs full of tablets. Text reads: Order repeat prescriptions on the NHS App.</p>

	<p>The NHS App allows you to access a range of NHS services quickly and easily.</p> <p>You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order repeat prescriptions Book and manage appointments View your GP health record <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Register your organ donation decision <p>.....and more!.....</p> <p>The NHS App can be downloaded to your mobile phone via the Apple App Store or Google Play.</p> <p>www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>The NHS App allows you to access a range of NHS services quickly and easily.</p> <p>You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order repeat prescriptions Book and manage appointments View your GP health record <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Register your organ donation decision <p>.....and more!.....</p> <p>www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Visual contains image of a hand holding a smartphone with the NHS App on the screen. Text reads: Do more with the NHS App! Order repeat prescriptions. Book appointments. View your records. And much more...</p>
<p>User guide video</p>	<p>Not sure how to get the NHS App set up on your phone?</p> <p>Our step-by-step video guide tells you everything you need to know.</p> <p>Including how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Download the app <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create an account <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allow access to your GP record <p>www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Not sure how to get the NHS App set up on your phone?</p> <p>Our step-by-step video guide tells you everything you need to know.</p> <p>www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	

<p>User guide video</p>	<p>The NHS App is the safest and easiest way to order your repeat prescription.</p> <p>Not sure what to do?</p> <p>Watch our video for a step-by-step guide.</p> <p>www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>The NHS App is the safest and easiest way to order your repeat prescription.</p> <p>Not sure what to do?</p> <p>Watch our video for a step-by-step guide.</p> <p>www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	
<p>User guide video</p>	<p>Did you know using the NHS App means you can choose which pharmacy to collect your medicine from when ordering a repeat prescription?</p> <p>Very handy if you're away from home or moving house!</p> <p>Watch our step-by-step video guide to find out how easy it is to order your regular medicines using the NHS App.</p> <p>www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Did you know using the NHS App means you can choose which pharmacy to collect your medicine from when ordering a repeat prescription?</p> <p>Very handy if you're away from home or moving house!</p> <p>Watch our step-by-step video guide to find out more.</p> <p>www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	
<p>Soundbites video</p>	<p>Have you tried ordering your repeat prescription on the NHS App yet?</p> <p>Hear from patients, a pharmacist and a GP in our new video - and find out why you should give it a try.</p>	<p>Have you tried ordering your repeat prescription on the NHS App yet?</p> <p>Hear from patients, a pharmacist and a GP in our new video - and find out why you should give it a try.</p>	

	You can download the NHS App for free to your mobile phone via the Apple App Store or Google Play.	You can download the NHS App for free to your mobile phone via the Apple App Store or Google Play.	
Soundbites video	<p>Watch our latest video to hear a GP, a pharmacist and patients talk about the benefits of using the NHS App to order repeat prescriptions.</p> <p>Find out more about the NHS App and how it can make managing your healthcare easier at www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>Watch our latest video to hear a GP, a pharmacist and patients talk about the benefits of using the NHS App to order repeat prescriptions.</p> <p>Find out more about the NHS App and how it can make managing your healthcare easier at www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	
Soundbites video	<p>"I would have had to go to the medical centre and wait in the queue, but this way it's simple and takes a lot of burden away from you."</p> <p>Martin from Stockport talks about why he orders his repeat prescriptions via the NHS App.</p> <p>Watch our latest video to hear more about Martin's experiences, and those of other patients who use the NHS App.</p> <p>Find out more about the NHS App at www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>"I would have had to go to the medical centre and wait in the queue, but this way it's simple and takes a lot of burden away from you."</p> <p>Martin from Stockport explains why he orders repeat prescriptions via the NHS App.</p> <p>Watch the video to find out more. www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	
Soundbites video	"You should be ordering your prescription. You, and only you, know what you need."	"You should be ordering your prescription. You, and only you, know what you need."	

	<p>That's the view of Peter, a pharmacist featured in our new video, talking about the benefits of ordering your own regular medicines on repeat prescription.</p> <p>Watch the video to hear more from Peter and find out about the benefits of ordering prescriptions online using the NHS App.</p> <p>www.nhs.uk/nhs-app</p>	<p>That's the view of Peter, a pharmacist featured in our new video, talking about the benefits of ordering your own regular medicines on repeat prescription.</p> <p>Watch the video to find out more.</p>	
Soundbites video	<p>"It is your personal healthcare assistant with you 24 hours a day" - pharmacist Mehmoona talking about the NHS App in our latest video.</p> <p>Watch the video to find out more.</p> <p>You can download the NHS App for free to your mobile phone via the Apple App Store or Google Play.</p>	<p>"It is your personal healthcare assistant with you 24 hours a day" - pharmacist Mehmoona talking about the NHS App in our latest video.</p> <p>Watch the video to find out more.</p> <p>You can download the NHS App for free to your mobile phone via the Apple App Store or Google Play.</p>	

Please contact the NHS GM campaigns team if you have any questions, or experience any problems downloading from the links provided – gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net.

APPENDIX 1: FAQs for patients

What is changing?

You (or a person nominated on your behalf) will have to order repeat prescriptions directly from your GP Practice. You will no longer be able to order repeat prescriptions through your pharmacy, an online pharmacy or other dispensing contractor.

Why can't the pharmacy hand in my repeat request slip on my behalf?

We believe that you, the patient (or an appointed friend, carer or relative), are best placed to order your repeat medicines.

What is the rationale behind this change?

The advantages of this change include:

- Reducing medicines waste – By checking your medicines cupboards at home, you can help reduce medicines waste by only ordering what you need and additional medicine does not get ordered for you accidentally.
- Saves GP time – especially if patients use electronic repeat dispensing (eRDs)
- Saves your time if medicines are ordered electronically using NHS app, online through your GP practice login or if you are on stable medication via electronic repeat dispensing.
- Dealing directly with your GP practice – communicating directly with your GP practice will save time and prevent communication issues when another party is involved.

Is this to save money?

No. This change is to re-invest the current medicines wastage spend back into the NHS where it is most needed.

When do I order my repeat prescription?

Order your repeat prescription 7 days before you are due to run out and not earlier. If you are on electronic repeat dispensing, your pharmacy will inform you when you collect the last batch of your medicines. You will then need to contact your practice as your doctor might want to see you for a medication review before giving permission to issue your prescription.

How do I order my repeat prescription?

- Online (the easiest and safest way) for example, via the NHS app or patient access. Once signed up to one of these, you can order your medicines from any PC/laptop, smartphone or tablet.
- Hand in your repeat slip at the surgery
- Post your repeat slip to the surgery

A friend, relative or carer can assist you with any of the above means of ordering your repeat prescription.

What if I need help setting up online ordering using the NHS app?

Contact your GP practice or local pharmacy for advice and support.

What if I don't have access to the internet?

You can either send us your request via post or hand it in at the surgery. If this is not possible please contact the practice to discuss alternative method.

Can a relative drop my repeat prescription request to the practice?

Yes. A friend, carer or relative can drop the request to the surgery on your behalf.

I already request my repeat prescription online with the surgery. Do I have to re-register?

No. Please continue to order your medicines online as you have been doing.

Does this change apply to everyone in my household?

It applies to anyone that relies on their local pharmacy or an online pharmacy to manage and order their medicines. If you do not take repeat medicines and you only receive prescriptions on the odd occasion, this change does not apply to you.

What if I am a housebound, vulnerable or on blister packs/dosette boxes?

This change does not affect you and your pharmacy can continue to order medication on your behalf.

APPENDIX 2: FAQs for GP practices**Why are we doing this?**

This initiative aims to reduce the waste of medicines that are routinely ordered but not needed. Prescribers, district nurses, and practice pharmacists have all highlighted the significant waste and safety issues related to current managed repeat ordering systems. The new system should give patients better control over medication ordering. It will avoid stockpiling of medication which can result in patients being confused about which medicines to take. In addition, it should prevent medication that has been stopped from being re-ordered by mistake.

What is changing and when?

From a publicised date, as agreed by the practice, all patients who are able to do so will have to request their own medication directly from their GP practice. Third-party ordering of repeat medication by community pharmacies, online pharmacies, and appliance contractors will be stopped for the majority of patients. Do not use community pharmacies or other third-party apps.

The exception will be patients who are unable to order their medication by any of the recommended routes. The recommended routes are:

- Order online (the easiest and safest way) - e.g. using GP online ordering process or download and use the NHS app. <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app/>
- Via the repeat prescription box at the GP practice
- Via post to the GP practice using the repeat prescription slip.

Who does this change affect?

This change only affects patients who are on repeat prescription and who order their repeat medication in the following ways:

- Have an agreement with a community pharmacy to order medication on their behalf.
- Take the repeat prescription request slip to a community pharmacy.

Patients who already take their repeat prescription request slips into the GP practice or order their repeat medication online are not affected.

This change only affects the ordering of repeat medication. *A patient can continue to have their prescription collected from the GP practice by their chosen Pharmacy if is not sent directly via Electronic Prescription Service (EPS).* The patient can then collect their medication from the pharmacy or have it delivered to their home.

Who is exempt from this change?

Some patients will continue to need GP and/or pharmacy support with repeat medication ordering. Exceptions to the change are:

- Patients who have dementia who do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf.
- Patients who are housebound who cannot order online, or do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf.
- Patients using a Monitored Dose System who do not have a carer or representative who can order on their behalf.

GPs, practice staff, community pharmacists, patients, and carers will know who this group of patients is. For these patients, it should be noted on the individual's patient record that they are exempt from this change.

What do practices need to do?

- Review your practice repeat prescribing system.
- Encourage patients to request their own repeat prescriptions.
 - For those who can use a computer or smartphone, online ordering is likely to be the easiest way.
 - For those who can't use this method, the repeat prescription request slip can be used.

This change will increase demand for registration for Patient Access/NHS app, however, in the longer term, it should mean patients are less likely to need help from the practice.

Nominating a Patient Access champion within the practice or from the Patient Participation Group could support patients with the registration process:

- Ask patients to make sure that they get the repeat prescription request slip from the pharmacy when their medicines are next dispensed or print from EMIS.
- For patients who cannot request their own repeat prescriptions either online or by using the repeat prescription request slip, and don't have a carer who can request the prescription for them, agree alternative methods. Community pharmacists may be able to help identify this group of patients. Alternative methods may include the practice pharmacist manages the generation of the patient's repeat prescription or check for suitability for eRD or pharmacy to continue ordering after Risk Assessment is completed.
- Let any community pharmacists linked to the GP practice know about the change.
- After the agreed and publicised date, stop accepting repeat prescription requests from community pharmacists except for the exception groups detailed above.

However, a patient should not be left without medication. If necessary, allow one more request and make the change on the next cycle:

- Assure patients that items not ordered will not be removed from their repeat prescription if they do not order the item on a particular cycle.
- Monthly ordering of 'as required' medication is a significant cause of waste. 'As required' items should be changed to 'variable repeat.'
- Promote the use of electronic Repeatable Dispensing (eRDs). eRD is a process that allows a patient to obtain repeated supplies of their medication or appliances without the need for the prescriber to sign authorised repeat prescriptions each time. eRD allows the prescriber to authorise and issue a batch of repeat prescriptions electronically until the patient needs to be reviewed (usually 12 months).

What if a patient runs out of their medication and hasn't ordered in time?

Patients who have not yet received the message to order their prescriptions themselves can still obtain a prescription; they should be provided with the information explaining the changes and given assistance to register for online ordering if needed. A repeat prescription should be supplied as quickly as possible, preferably by transmitting it electronically to the pharmacy. Out of hours, emergency supplies can be made at the discretion of the pharmacist. However, patients may be charged for this. A patient can also call 111 if they require medication out of hours they will then be referred to a pharmacy that is participating in the NHS Community Pharmacy Consultation Service. A pharmacist will interview the patient over the telephone and will assess the legality of the supply before issuing an emergency supply. As well as referrals from general practice, the CPCS service takes referrals to community pharmacy for minor illness, or if a patient needs an urgent supply of a medicine from NHS 111 and NHS 111 online, Integrated Urgent Care Clinical Assessment Services, and in some cases patients referred via the 999 service.

Will I need more staff to launch this initiative?

If patients use the NHS app and Patient access, initially you may want to consider a dedicated prescription clerk to support the set up. For email and repeat slip requests- these may come throughout the day, therefore having cut-off points to allow for 48 hour turnaround may need to be discussed e.g. scripts ordered before 2pm on Monday will be issued by Wednesday, any issued after 2pm will be Thursday. These timings would need to be clearly stated to patients on website and social media. A push for eRD will remove the administrative workload in the practice.

How much time will this take up?

A greater amount of time would be required during the setting up and the month ahead of the launch as the initial setting up of the initiative will take some time as would need to include:

- Ensuring the practice has systems in place to be accepting patient requests which may involve:
 - Having dedicated staff member trained on the process on accepting repeat requests from patients.
 - Setting up a dedicated voicemail service for support and organising drop-in sessions
 - Agreeing the list of vulnerable patients that are exempt from this change and what the process should be for those vulnerable patients.

- Agreeing the date that the change will take place and ensuring all practice staff are aware.
- Meeting with/visiting your local community pharmacies to notify them of the change.
- Notifying your patients of the change through patient campaign/communications/letters

APPENDIX 3: FAQs for pharmacies

Why should pharmacies that offer a great and professional service must change their systems?

There are several reasons why the change in policy needs to take place and these are primarily centred on the patient: their responsibility and medication compliance. Patients must be fully aware of their medication, the reasons for it and the appropriate compliance with taking and ordering it. Unfortunately, this will mean some changes for pharmacies, but GPs are committed to working closely with pharmacies so that disruption can be minimised, and the changes should reduce workloads for many pharmacies where patients take up online solutions and automate the process.

Will ordering by pharmacies be stopped completely?

No, GPs will work closely with pharmacies and together will ensure that patients that require additional assistance in the new system (Assisted Patients) will get special care and specific policies geared to their personal needs. This could mean that pharmacies continue to order on behalf of some patients, where all stakeholders agree that this is the best solution for a particular patient. There will be patients and carers who may need more support and across Greater Manchester we will ensure that this is available and clearly signposted for patients/carers. Online ordering will not be appropriate for everyone and those patients who are unable to order online will still be able to order their prescriptions in the usual way.

Why are the changes being made as it will not save money unless prescriptions are subsequently stopped for clinical reasons?

Firstly, it is possible that savings can be made without prescriptions changing. Where patients have medication and do not need to reorder in a particular period, improved engagement (i.e., less ordering when not required) will make savings.

Secondly, the changes intend to put more control and responsibility into the hands of patients; increasing the engagement between patient and GP will improve compliance which consequently could also result in more frequent reviews and changes in prescriptions which again could result in savings.

Community pharmacies also have a key role in supporting patients and their adherence to medicines, through the New Medicines Service and more general support for patients on regular medicines who are managing long term conditions.

What will be the impact on pharmacy workload?

It is expected that as pharmacies will be ordering repeat prescriptions for fewer patients the workload should decrease for pharmacies. We envisage that this will lead to increased time that pharmacies can spend helping patients that have been identified as needing additional assistance and therefore increasing the quality of the service.

What rights do GP practices have to prevent patients from choosing to ask pharmacies to help them order prescriptions?

All NHS organisations have a statutory duty to maximise safety and efficiency (reduced waste) as well as provide patient choice. Often, this requires judgment in order to satisfy all three criteria. The third-party ordering of repeat prescriptions is not being stopped for all patients and there are still several options and choices for patients to choose from including:

- using GP online services i.e., patient access or downloading the new NHS App onto a mobile phone or tablet device
- handing in the tear-off part of your repeat prescription to your GP surgery
- a letter to your GP surgery

In the situation where there are no choices for a patient due to their circumstances then GPs will look at these cases on an individual basis and make sure that that patient is not disadvantaged. These will be classed as “Assisted Patients” and the surgery can continue to accept third-party orders for these patients where appropriate.

What will happen if patients run out of medicine and what are the risks of patients going some days or even significant periods of time without taking important daily medicines or inhalers?

It is very important for there to be excellent communication between GPs, Patients and Pharmacies to ensure patients understand any changes that might affect them and so order their medicines in a timely manner so that they do not run out. As detailed in Q2 Assisted Patients will have special considerations / support which will significantly reduce this risk. If a patient has run out of medicine, they should seek a prescription from their GP for the medicines they have run out of. If their GP is closed, patients can be referred to the CPCS for an emergency supply of medication via NHS 111, the Integrated Urgent Care Clinical Assessment Services, and in some via the 999 service.

What if patients have no online capability and are not mobile enough to make it to the GP Practice (i.e., they have mobility issues and live a lot closer to the pharmacy)?

With agreement from local practices, patients may be able to complete the request slip themselves and drop this off with their local pharmacy. The patient's signature and date would assist the practices in knowing that the request had been initiated by the patient rather than the pharmacy. The pharmacy could deliver the patient's request to the surgery. Patients may also be able to ask for assistance from their relatives or carers where applicable to order on their behalf from the GP practice.

How do you plan to communicate the changes to patients?

Each GP practice will communicate with patients through an array of communication channels. These will vary from practice to practice but will include leaflets, posters, letters, waiting room screens, GP appointment communication, emails, texts, etc. These communications will begin at least 12 weeks before any changes are planned to take place thus giving patients the time, they need to consider the implications and to ask their GP practice-relevant questions.

What do you expect from pharmacies in terms of patient communication?

The primary responsibility to make these communications will be with the GP surgeries. However, it would make sense for all stakeholders including Pharmacies to display a poster and make leaflets available for patients. Where questions are asked, the patient can be referred to the patient information leaflet, and if they require further information, they can be signposted to their GP practice. This will help keep pharmacy impact to a minimum.

What do you expect of pharmacies if a patient does run out of medication?

Pharmacies will act as they do with existing systems – there are no changes to the existing emergency supply protocols.

Will the GP practice really be able to offer the level of clinical advice and support that I can as a pharmacist?

This realignment is not intending to remove the need for clinical advice with the pharmacist. Pharmacies will still have the opportunity to provide patients with clinical advice at the point of dispensing and collection/delivery and this will not change.

Why don't you just change to Electronic Repeat Dispensing – that would solve everything?

Electronic Repeat Dispensing is seen as a key tool to help improve efficiency and effectiveness. However, it is not a magic solution to solve all weaknesses in the current system. Electronic Repeat Dispensing will work well for low risk, standard medication that is typically taken unchanged over long periods of time and will therefore be used for a relatively small number of patients. Many practices are actively seeking to increase usage of the Electronic Repeat Dispensing option.

How do I manage my workload effectively when I don't know when prescriptions were ordered so how do I know when the patient will come in for them?

In most cases repeat prescriptions will be received electronically via the spine and will therefore be available to download prior to the patient presenting for collection enabling workload planning. It is not anticipated that pharmacy workload will increase significantly as a result of these changes.

As a pharmacy contractor, if I don't know what has been requested by the patient how do I know the prescription I receive from the practice is correct?

Increased automation of the process associated with online ordering is likely to increase the accuracy of transcription of the patient's chosen order through the process.

How will patients know how to order online? And what about patients that are not tech savvy?

Practices are able to provide patients with information about how to login and use their online systems. For patients that do not have access to the appropriate technology other options are available for them dependant on each practice's policy (see Q5). If none of these options are suitable then they can be considered for continuation of Third Party ordering as Assisted Patients.

Will there be increased calls to practices when the changes are implemented?

Based on experiences of other areas that have already gone through a similar change in process, there is an increase in contacts in the few weeks before the implementation and about 4-6 weeks after the implementation of the changes. This is very normal for any system change. However, after this period, the new system quickly beds in and workloads actually reduce and clinicians then have more time to invest in advice rather than admin.

How does the nominated representative system work?

Family members and care home managers are able to request access to online services as a nominated representative with the patient's consent. This would allow patients to ask family members or close friends to assist them with the online ordering process if required.

Why don't GPs' remove 'when required' (PRN) medication from repeat templates to prevent these being ordered unnecessarily (so pharmacies could continue to request medication)?

Practices may remove prn medication from repeat prescriptions however this means that when placing an order online, patients can only see items that appear on their repeat list. Removing prn items makes it a little more difficult for patients when they need to re-order as they need to type in a manual message that then needs to be interpreted by practice admin staff, offering increased potential for error.

Could the patient drop their prescription request personally off at the pharmacy and the pharmacy still submit this?

Please see question 8. This is a solution if agreeable with the practice, although some way of identifying that the request has been initiated by the patient would be needed e.g. patient signature and date.

What financial impact will this have on primary care?

More patients ordering online will help to alleviate some of the pressures which GP practices and community pharmacy continue to face. This will enable them to better support patients with more complex needs and continue to provide existing high quality services, but with improved access.

Will MDS/Blister pack ordering be managed?

Patients with monitored dosage systems in many cases will meet the criteria for management under the continued third party ordering of repeat prescriptions scheme particularly as earlier ordering may be needed. In some cases however the patient may still be capable of ordering their medicines themselves and this should be considered as an option.