

How to get started with Repeat Dispensing

The following tips are to be used by pharmacy contractors in conjunction with the service specification that appears on the PSNC website. Links to other resources on repeat dispensing are available on the PSNC website. (www.psnc.org.uk/contract).

1. Read the CPPE distance NHS repeat dispensing *focal point* programme and online assessment.

The NHS regulations state that 'a pharmacist shall undertake appropriate training in respect of repeat dispensing'. Successful completion of the CPPE open learning material provides evidence of training. The CPPE programme is designed to be used as part of a learning community and is also available for pre-registration trainees, as a commissioned workshop or for personal learning. Even if you have already completed the original programme (*From pathfinder to practice*), you may find that the *focal point* format provides a useful resource of key information to refer to in everyday practice and is ideal to support repeat dispensing training for your team. Booklet 1 takes you through the steps of implementing a repeat dispensing service. Booklet 2 uses a case study and a selection of clinical vignettes to work through with your pharmacy team or GP practice colleagues. It is available to order from www.cppe.ac.uk – booking reference 39404.

2. Identify a repeat dispensing co-ordinator for your pharmacy.

Whilst not a requirement for implementation of repeat dispensing, the pathfinder sites have reported the benefits of identifying someone within your pharmacy, not necessarily the pharmacist, to co-ordinate the service.

3. Identify where you will safely and securely store at the pharmacy a patient's repeatable prescription and, if requested by the patient, the related batch issues.

The repeatable prescription is the authority to supply the medicine and must be kept at the pharmacy. The batch issues can be retained by the patient or the patient can ask the pharmacy to keep them on their behalf. There are no specific requirements for storage of the repeatable prescription or batch issues, other than the storage method is safe and secure. They will need to be stored in such a manner that your pharmacy staff, including locums, can easily locate the relevant repeatable prescription or batch issues. You will need to ensure that records of the dispensing of repeatable prescriptions are maintained in order that there is a clear audit trail in place which will allow pharmacy staff to unambiguously determine dates and quantities of medicines or appliances supplied.

4. Ensure you and your pharmacy support staff are aware of the local agreements for repeat dispensing arrangements.

Although it is not a requirement that pharmacy support staff undertake training in respect of repeat dispensing, they will clearly need to understand the system, including any local arrangements.

5. Find out how patients are initially going to be selected for the repeat dispensing service.

Repeat dispensing is not suitable for all patients and is most likely to benefit patients with long-term, stable conditions that need regular medicines. In the Pathfinder sites, some PCTs developed inclusion and exclusion criteria and others encouraged pharmacists to identify suitable patients.

The initial patient selection process is likely to affect the workload at the GP practice and, therefore, referrals from pharmacists highlighting patients suitable for repeat dispensing should be discussed with the GP/practice prior to any discussions with patients.

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6. Discuss with your local GP practice/s how consent will be obtained from patients.

Due to the necessary exchange of information about medicines or treatment between the GP and the pharmacist, patients will need to give fully informed consent before participating in the repeat dispensing service. The patient's agreement to receiving their medicines by the repeat dispensing system should be recorded on the DH agreement form (these forms will be provided by your PCT).

Practices will usually identify patients suitable for repeat dispensing and obtain patients' agreement; however, local arrangements might mean that in some areas the pharmacist assists in identifying suitable patients. In these circumstances, the practice may arrange with the pharmacist to obtain patients' agreement. In so doing, a copy of the agreement form should still be kept in the patient's notes and one copy should be retained by the patient.

The reverse side of the agreement form that is signed by the patient and GP/practice staff usefully explains the repeat dispensing process to the patient, but remember that the main purpose of the consent process is to ensure that the patient is fully informed that information on their medicines or treatment may be exchanged between their GP and pharmacist. If you are involved in obtaining agreement from the patient, you should be sure to fully inform the patient of this arrangement.

7. Talk to your GP practice to discuss how changes in medication will be communicated to the pharmacy and how you will communicate any clinically significant issues with the prescriber.

Pharmacists and prescribers will need to contact each other in certain situations to ensure patient safety and fulfil the requirements of the regulations. Exactly how this is done will be determined at a local level. The prescriber has to make every effort to ensure that the pharmacy is informed of any dose change and pharmacists are required to inform the prescriber of any issues which are deemed to be clinically significant by the pharmacist, which occur in relation to the repeatable prescription.

8. Ensure any locums are competent to provide the repeat dispensing service and that you have systems in place for locums to be aware of any local agreements.

It is the pharmacy contractor's responsibility to ensure that pharmacists they employ are competent to provide a repeat dispensing service and that systems are in place to ensure that locum pharmacists are aware of any local arrangements

9. Ensure that you have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the dispensing of repeatable prescriptions.

From 1 January 2005 The Royal Pharmaceutical Society introduced a professional requirement for pharmacists to put in place Standard Operating Procedures for the dispensing process. Pharmacies will already have an SOP in place for the dispensing of prescriptions; repeat dispensing is part of the dispensing process and the SOP will need to include operating procedures for repeat dispensing when your pharmacy starts to operate a repeat dispensing service.