

## How to get started with Repeat Dispensing Suggestions for LPCs

Repeat Dispensing is a key part of the community pharmacy contract. It can deliver many benefits to patients, PCTs and pharmacies, but in order for it to be successfully implemented it requires local coordination by PCTs; LPCs should try to assist PCTs with this important task. The benefits of Repeat Dispensing may need to be highlighted to the PCT including, patient convenience, reduced workload in GP practices and reduction in wastage of prescribed medicines.

A list of key issues follows for LPCs to consider; some actions might have already been undertaken and the points below are not designed to be a comprehensive list, but they should serve to generate ideas as to how to progress the roll out of this Essential service. This information is to be used together with the 'How to get started' sheet for contractors and the CPPE NHS repeat dispensing *focal point* programme ([www.cppe.ac.uk](http://www.cppe.ac.uk)).

- 1. Find out who is the PCT's repeat dispensing lead and start a dialogue with them. Find out how the LMC are approaching this issue and whether they have a lead for Repeat Dispensing.** PCTs in Pathfinder sites have identified a number of factors that contribute to the successful implementation of repeat dispensing services and one of these factors is the identification of a local project manager or lead for repeat dispensing within the PCT. Likewise the Pathfinder sites found that ensuring GP 'buy in' to the system was essential, hence early liaison with colleagues at the LMC is of paramount importance. The LPC and LMC may need to work together to 'sell' the concept to local GPs.
- 2. Highlight to contractors what they need to do to implement repeat dispensing and then continue to keep your contractors up to date on local plans for introducing repeat dispensing arrangements.** Repeat dispensing is an Essential service within the new community pharmacy contractual framework and pharmacy contractors are being paid for repeat dispensing now. The PSNC 'How to get started' sheet could be disseminated to your contractors to ensure they are aware of the issues they need to address in their pharmacies. They will also need to know about local progress and the arrangements being made for roll out in their area.
- 3. Highlight to contractors the need to undertake appropriate training.** The Drug Tariff Part V1A sets out the payment schedule and notifies contractors that 'Pharmacists undertaking repeat dispensing should undertake appropriate training. Appropriate training for these purposes includes successful completion of the CPPE open learning programme detailed above.
- 4. Discuss the need for local training events with the PCT and LMC.** Your PCT may wish to organise local workshops for contractors, GPs and their respective staff, to help develop communication links across the patch. While attendance by contractors is advisable it cannot be deemed mandatory.
- 5. Establish how practices will be identifying suitable patients.** Once you know which practices will be generating repeatable prescriptions, practices will need to determine how they are going to select suitable patients. 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.

A lot of Pathfinder sites designed simple selection criteria to help identify and invite patients into their scheme. Whilst it might usually be the practice that identifies suitable patients, some practices want to consider involving pharmacists in the identification of suitable patients, based upon the locally agreed criteria.

- 6. Discuss what arrangements PCTs and local practices are making regarding obtaining patient consent.** Due to the necessary exchange of information about

## How to get started with Repeat Dispensing Suggestions for LPCs

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 method should be recorded on the DH agreement form and this form must also be signed by a GP or member of practice staff.

If the pharmacy is involved in recruiting patients, the GP 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 retained by the patient. You will need to discuss how the PCT will supply contractors with copies of the DH agreement form.

- 7. Discuss with your PCT, LMC and contractors the communication channels which pharmacies and GP practices will use.** At times during the repeat dispensing process it will be necessary for prescribers and pharmacists to exchange information. Effective communication systems are vital, particularly where dosage and medicines changes are to be made. The types of communication mechanisms will be for local determination, but they must allow for the prescriber to make every effort to contact the pharmacy about changes to dosage or medicine and allow for the pharmacist to inform the prescriber of any issues which are deemed to be clinically significant by the pharmacist. Local workshops provide an ideal opportunity for these communication links to be developed.

In some of the Pathfinder sites, local stationery was developed for communications between pharmacies and GP practices and also for communication with patients, e.g. reminder sheets for use when the patient has the last batch issue dispensed. You may wish to discuss this with your PCT and LMC.

- 8. Consider how contractors and GP practices will promote the service.** Patient leaflets are expected to be distributed to PCTs in June. These will be useful to help inform patients and promote the service. PCTs might want to consider distributing leaflets through pharmacies as well as GP practices. Once systems are fully in place you may want to consider publicity through the local media to raise awareness.