

To: All GP Practices

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Dear Colleague,

Issuing duplicate prescriptions

A duplicate prescription is an identical prescription reprinted as a replacement for a lost, defaced or damaged prescription. The issuing of a duplicate prescription should only occur in exceptional circumstances.

GP Clinical Systems offer the facility to REPRINT or REISSUE a prescription. The two are intended for different purposes:

- 1) REPRINT (duplicate); Intended to replace a lost, defaced or damaged prescription. The patient's clinical record will show one prescription and audit trail will show the reason for this and that a second copy was printed.
- 2) REISSUE; Uses the patient's medication list from a previous prescription to issue a new prescription. The patient's medication journal will now have two prescribing episodes recorded on the dates issued.

Using either of these inappropriately will result in the patient's medical record being incorrect. Patient safety may then be at risk; for example, the ECR will be incorrect and should the patient be admitted into secondary care the medication checks will then be compromised.

All practice staff should be aware of the process for managing requests for duplicate prescriptions as per the practice's written Repeat Prescribing Policy. A HSCB audit tool is available to support practices develop this policy

http://primarycare.hscni.net/pdf/Repeat_Prescribing_Audit_v2_May2013.doc

When a request is made for a reprint, by a patient or by a pharmacy, because the original prescript appears to have been lost, defaced or never received, the following actions should be taken:

- thoroughly search the practice consultation rooms and offices, the pharmacy collection envelopes and patient prescription collection box
- in the case of a lost script, check the prescription collection records
- check the patient's records to establish if the prescription has been printed and issued.

Only when all of these have been exhausted should the prescription be reprinted.

In all cases where a prescription is reprinted, the reason for this should be documented in the patient's notes. The prescription form should also be clearly annotated "Duplicate" either by the clinical system or hand written note. If repeated duplicate requests are being made by a patient, the GP should agree with the patient a date for review. Repeated requests for duplicates from a pharmacy should be queried with the pharmacist.

Recommended Actions:

- Audit the number of duplicate reprinted prescriptions issued, for example, over a week. Discuss the results with local community pharmacists and work together to understand how this can be minimized.
- Agree and implement a process for your practice for managing requests for duplicate prescriptions. Acute and repeat prescribing protocols should be updated to include this process.
- Endorse reprinted prescriptions with the word 'DUPLICATE' as this will greatly assist the identification of such prescriptions.
- Implement a scheme to keep track of all prescriptions issued directly to pharmacies for example, a daily log of patients' prescriptions that have been collected.
- Requests made by a GP requesting a community pharmacist to dispense an "Emergency supply at the request of a GP", should be noted in the patient's record and the prescription **must be furnished to the pharmacy within 72 hours** of the request in line with the legislation¹.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/1916/regulation/224/made>

I will also be writing to community pharmacy contractors to bring this issue to their attention. I will ask that they review their processes to ensure that robust systems are in place within the pharmacy to control the number of requests for duplicate prescriptions.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact your Medicines Management Adviser who will be able to help you implement this guidance.

Thank you for your co-operation with this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Brogan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joe Brogan
Assistant Director of Integrated Care
Pharmacy and Medicines Management
