

Prescription Duration Statement

Purpose:

- This document provides guidance for prescribers on the appropriate duration of prescriptions including when 7 day prescriptions are appropriate

Repeat Prescriptions

- The Department of Health recognises that a 28 day repeat prescribing interval is recognised by the NHS as making the best possible balance between patient convenience, good medical practice and minimal drug wastage”

Guidelines for quantities to be issued

- Practices may consider having a practice policy for prescribing including quantities to be issued on prescription
- 1. Acute prescription
- Normally no more than one or two weeks supply for acute conditions, where applicable
- For many infections, a short course of only 3-5 days is likely to be appropriate
- 2. Repeat prescription
- Normally no more than 28 days’ supply of medicines for non- acute conditions
- 28 day quantities are regarded as best practice pertaining to safe repeat prescribing systems
- 3. Patient Need
- The decision to provide a longer quantity has to be balanced against patient need (including financial considerations), safety and the potential for waste
- It is estimated that approximately 80% of the population do not pay for their prescriptions
- Feedback suggests that a blanket approach to 28 day prescribing adversely affects those who do pay for their prescriptions
- Therefore, it is proposed, at present, for GPs to carry out 28 day prescribing for patients who do not pay for their prescriptions, providing they are stable on their medication e.g. those with long term conditions
- Pre-payment certificates may help some patients financially and repeat dispensing may offer convenience for patients on regular stable medication (see details below)

Prepayment Certificates

- Prepayment certificates are the most economical way of paying for prescriptions when more than one regular prescription item is required each month
- More information including current costs are available at <http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1127.aspx> or contact the NHSBSA on 0845 250 0030
- Patients can apply online at <https://apps.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppcwebsales/patient.do> or by telephone on 03003301341

7 day prescriptions

- If a prescription is written for 28 days, then all 28 days of medication will be provided to the patient at the same time
- There is no requirement for GPs to issue seven day prescriptions for patients or pharmacists requesting them for Domiciliary Medication Dosage Systems (DMDS) e.g. dosette boxes.
- Since 2005, the contractual framework for community pharmacy essential services includes an amount to provide appropriate adjustments to service, which might include DMDS, but only for those patients who meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- There is a significant cohort of patients for whom a more regularised provision of medication is appropriate. For example, patients who may be at risk of self-harm or who require their compliance to be reported or monitored
- If it is the **clinical consideration of the prescriber** that this is the case, then the prescriptions should reflect this period of review or provision, whether single day, 7 days or other length of time
- For further information please see [Hampshire LPC briefing](#) on DDA and DMDS

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Repeat Dispensing (Batch Dispensing)

- Repeat dispensing is the process by which patients can obtain supplies of their repeat medicines over a defined period of time, without the need to contact their GP practice on each occasion a new supply is required
- Since 1st March 2015, changes have been made to the pharmacy contract who must ensure that appropriate advice about the benefits of repeat dispensing is given to any patient who:
 - (i) has a long term, stable medical condition (that is, a medical condition that is unlikely to change in the short to medium term), and
 - (ii) requires regular medicine in respect of that medical condition,
- including, where appropriate, advice that encourages the patient to discuss repeat dispensing of that medicine with a prescriber at the provider of primary medical services whose patient list the patient is on
- The decision whether to use a repeat dispensing service is a matter for the prescriber's clinical judgement and mutual agreement between the prescriber, the patient and, ideally, the pharmacist
- The potential benefits include:
 - Greater choice for patients who require repeat prescriptions for the medicines they need
 - Reduced workload for GP practices
 - More efficient use of practice staff time
 - More opportunities for early interventions to identify medicines-related problems through improved patient contact
 - Fewer prescriptions for medicines no longer needed
 - Greater involvement and better use of the skills of community pharmacists
- Under the repeat dispensing system, the prescriber produces a master 'repeatable' prescription on a standard FP10 prescription form for the patient's repeat medicines which is the legal signed prescription
- A series of accompanying 'batch issues' (**up to 12 months**), one for each time the prescription is to be dispensed, is supplied at the same time (these are also printed on FP10 forms) and these are kept at the pharmacy of the patient's choice
- Repeat Dispensing is also available via electronic prescribing (EPS2)
- If a repeat-dispensed medicine needs to be stopped, this can easily be cancelled by the prescriber, avoiding possible mistakes but keeping that batch still usable (when prescribed electronically)
- It is possible to produce several 'batches' of repeat dispensing prescriptions for one patient, e.g. one for regular monthly medication and one for 'prn' use medication.
- For further information please see <http://psnc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/PSNC-Briefing-004.15-Increasing-use-of-the-NHS-Repeat-Dispensing-service.pdf>

References

- Wessex LMC <https://www.wessexlmcs.com/durationofprescriptionsand7dayprescribing>
- Glos CCG Guidance on the Issue of 7 Day Prescriptions Oct 2014 <http://www.lancsmmg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2013/04/Guidelines-for-Good-Prescribing-in-Primary-Care-update-FINAL.pdf> accessed 09/09/2015
- Hampshire LPC DDA and DMDS briefing Aug 2010 https://www.cpsc.org.uk/application/files/4215/0937/0639/DDA__MDS_Briefing_updated_Aug_2010.pdf
- PSNC Briefing on Repeat Dispensing March 2015 <http://psnc.org.uk/services-commissioning/essential-services/repeat-dispensing/>

Further related guidance

- On Medicines Management Team website
 - Electronic Repeat Dispensing
 - Prescriptions for patients travelling abroad for extended periods
 - Pharmacy Managed Repeat Prescriptions