

Electronic Prescription Service

Process guidance for dispensing suppliers on the EPS Release 2 validation prescription

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1. Background

When a dispensing site becomes business live¹ with a compliant EPS Release 2 dispensing system, the pharmacy contractor becomes eligible for a one off EPS Release 2 allowance payment of £1,000.

At this point;

- The contractor's ability to process Release 2 prescriptions needs to be reflected in the NHS Choices web site and web services (these are used when setting a nomination for a patient from another site).
- Initially, only prescriptions nominated to a release 2 compliant pharmacy will be sent via the Electronic Prescription Service. This is to prevent Release 2 prescriptions being presented at sites not yet live with a Release 2 system.

A contractor without a Release 2 system cannot dispense and claim for these prescriptions. The web services are used as part of the process to ensure only release 2 enabled contractors receive nominations.

Without an enablement process there is no formal mechanism to record and verify that a contractor is business live and for the payment agency to pay the contractor's one off EPS Release 2 allowance.

2. Audience and purpose

This document is intended for dispensing system suppliers and for the people involved in the deployment / commissioning of dispensing systems. The aim of the document is to explain the final step of the site commissioning process which will;

- trigger the one off EPS Release 2 allowance of a £1,000 payment to the pharmacy contractor
- allow patient nominations to be created for this pharmacy contractor from other sites
- show the pharmacy contractor site as enabled for nominations on the NHS Choices web site

Additionally in support of the above this document will explain;

- how system suppliers can request the tailored electronic prescriptions (validation prescriptions) which are used to trigger the events described above
- the information required by CFH from the dispensing system suppliers in order to prepare and distribute these prescriptions
- the lead time from requesting to receiving the validation scripts
- the steps that need to be performed on site to process the validation prescription
- when patient nominations can be processed for that site
- outcomes that need to be verified after the dispensing of the validation prescription to confirm the process has been successful

3. Terminology

Throughout this document the "Synthetic reimbursement endorsement message" will be known as "The validation prescription" for brevity.

¹ Business live is defined as having the system installed and working, along with the users having been trained to use the Release 2 system and having the necessary smartcard (and roles/ attributes) to actively operate the system.

4. Pre-requisites

In order for the actions described above to be performed, a number of pre-requisites must have been successfully completed.

These pre-requisites are as follows;

- the CFH accredited Release 2 dispensing system has been technically deployed to the contractor's site.
- the CFH commissioning tests have been successfully completed at the first of type sites and the suppliers have successfully proven the release 2 installations at the subsequent (national rollout) deployments.
- the relevant users at the dispensary have been trained in the operation of the Release 2 system.²
- the users have had the user profiles on their smartcards updated to operate with the Release 2 system.

5. The validation process

The final steps of the commissioning process (i.e. the EPS Release2 allowance of a £1,000 payment and the site being classified as EPS Release 2 enabled) are all triggered from the dispensing of the validation prescription. These validation prescriptions are synthetic Release 2 prescriptions that have been specially prepared to produce the above outcomes.

5.1. Requesting the validation prescriptions.

In order for NHS CFH to produce a validation prescription, the site to be commissioned along with approximate deployment dates must be communicated to NHS CFH. A proforma to assemble this information has been prepared and is available to download here:

www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/eps/suppliers/validation

Once the relevant information has been inserted into the proforma, please email the spreadsheet to cfh.epsrelease@nhs.net with a subject line of "Request for Validation Prescriptions"

Suppliers are not required to submit data for all their contractor sites at any one time, requests for validation prescriptions for different sites can be made at any time as required, and preferably when the supplier has a high degree of confidence when each site will be commissioned.

From the date of submission of a request for a Validation Prescription, processing the request will take 20 working days. Once the submission has been processed, the supplier will receive an email containing a spreadsheet of prescription GUIDs (the 18 character barcode value) – one for each site to be commissioned.

² This training may need to be revisited/ expanded depending on the deployment schedule of R2 prescribing systems which provide scripts to the dispensary.

5.2. Processing the validation prescriptions

The processing of the validation prescription for each pharmacy contractor can be completed once the pre-requisites documented above have been completed. In essence the validation prescription is simply an electronic prescription containing a single item that has been tailored to produce the required outcomes. The prescription must be downloaded to the site by entering the prescription GUID/ scanning the barcode on the spreadsheet. Once the prescription arrives in the dispensary, the item must be 'dispensed' as normal and both the dispense notification and the electronic reimbursement endorsement messages must be submitted straightaway (and not in accordance with the NHS reimbursement and remuneration policy detailed in the Drug Tariff as would be the case for the submission of reimbursement endorsement messages for payment). The contractor will not be reimbursed for the item 'dispensed' but the NHSBSA, NHS Prescription Services will pay the EPS Release 2 Allowance of £1,000 to the contractor in line with the normal schedule for payments for the pharmacy contractor.

Only process a Validation Prescription at the specific site it has been prepared for. Processing more than one Validation Prescription at any given site will not result in any additional payments being made to the contractor. Attempts to process Validation Prescriptions at sites not designated for that prescription will mean the validation prescription will not be available to dispense at the site it was initially prepared for.

If the validation prescription process is unclear or if you have any further questions then please contact CFH at cfh.epsrelease@nhs.net

5.3. Verifying the site has been successfully enabled

Once the dispensing steps have been completed, both the NHSBSA and NHS Choices (the providers of the EPS web services) will be informed that the given site has been enabled for EPS release 2. It is advised that either the system supplier or the dispensary themselves verify that these updates have been completed accurately.

The notifications to NHSBSA and NHS Choices take place as follows;

If the electronic reimbursement endorsement message for the validation prescription is submitted prior to 5pm on a Tuesday, the information will be communicated to the NHSBSA and NHS Choices and will be reflected in the live data by the following Monday at 8am. If the electronic reimbursement endorsement message is not submitted till after 5pm on any given Tuesday, then the update will not be reflected at NHSBSA and NHS Choices until Monday week by 8am.

Once the relevant deadline has passed, the system supplier can verify that the information has been updated in three ways.

- 1) The live web services can be queried to verify that site is now showing as enabled (this can be performed using any compliant Release 2 system).
- 2) A user can visit www.nhs.uk (NHS Choices) and search for the pharmacy. As per the screenshot example below, the pharmacy will be showing as enabled for the Electronic Prescription Service.
- 3) NHSBSA, NHS prescription services will pay the pharmacy contractor the EPS Release 2 Allowance of £1,000 in line with the normal reimbursement and remuneration timeline. This allowance will be listed as a separate item in the contractors statement.

If any of the verification steps above have failed then the user is advised to contact the system supplier's helpdesk who in turn should raise a ticket with the National Helpdesk for problem resolution. The 'user' is either a member of the system supplier's organisation or a designated person at the dispensary. The 'user' needs to be agreed between the system supplier and the contractor.

The screenshot shows the NHS Choices website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation tabs for 'Medical advice', 'Health A-Z', 'Live Well', 'Careers Direct', 'Health news', and 'Find and choose a service'. Below the navigation is a yellow banner with 'Important information about swine flu'. The main content area is titled 'Pharmacies Results' and shows a search for 'Dove' in 'Dove, Devon, Exmoor National Park, EX20 2PP'. The results list 'Dove Surgery Ltd' as 'Enabled for the Electronic Prescription Service'. A red dashed circle highlights this status. The sidebar on the right contains information about 'Electronic Prescription Service' and 'Pharmacy services'.

5.4. Commencement of patient nomination processing

Once the site has been fully commissioned, patient nominations can be processed at that site. Nominations for the site that has just been commissioned cannot be created from other locations until the site is shown as enabled in the EPS web services. The site will be shown as enabled in the web services on the date determined in section 4.3 above.

5.5. Electronic Prescription processing/ Business As Usual

From the time the validation prescription has been processed, the site is fully commissioned and can commence the processing of live electronic prescriptions.

6. Appendix A – Overview of the end to end process

The diagram below illustrates how the NHS UK web services (and NHS Choices website) are updated when a pharmacy becomes business live. However, without a validation prescription, each pharmacy would face (potentially) several months delay in being shown as enabled in the services (and no other party would be able to nominate that pharmacy). For a nomination to be set at a GP site (or from any other dispensing site) the pharmacy to be nominated must be shown as enabled in the web services.

Until that time, the only place a patient can be nominated is at the premises of the pharmacy that is to be nominated. A pharmacy nominating themselves for a patient is not required to check the web services as the site will only be able to create a nomination with a release 2 compliant system – the requirements stipulate that the web services are only used when creating a nomination for another site.

Without a validation prescription the process will be prolonged. A patient will need to be present in the pharmacy and be offered to nominate them. Upon agreeing, the process will halt until the patient returned to their GP for another prescription at a later date. At this point, upon synchronising the patient's details the GP will note a nomination has been set and ask the patient if they would like to use it for their prescription.

At this time, the process will resume, the dispensary will dispense and claim for the electronic prescription and NHSBSA will receive the claim at the end of the month and reimburse the contractor in line with the usual reimbursement cycle. NHSBSA will set the flag against the dispensary to show that it is EPS release 2 compliant. On a weekly basis an update file is sent from the NHSBSA to NHS Choices to update the data held on their web site and web services. This end to end process could take several months depending on the frequency of patients visiting the dispensary/ GP.

NHS UK end to end process

