



Community Pharmacy Smartcard roll-out in support of EPS R2 and Business Continuity Plans for out-of-hours smartcard unlocking.

There is a requirement to support Community Pharmacy implementation of Electronic Prescription Service release 2 (EPSr2) throughout Greater Manchester. Currently there is a shortage in the number of smartcard owners/holders therefore some pharmacies' ability to fully interact with electronic prescription is restricted.

In addition, the introduction of Spine2 in August 2014, removed a self-service facility which allowed for remote self-unlocking of smartcards through the card management service (CMS). This has placed a significant risk on pharmacies working extended hours who experience basic smartcard malfunction i.e. locked cards. Local Registration Authority (RA) teams have no provision for smartcard support outside of normal office hours (9am – 5pm), therefore an alternative self-serve solution needs to be implemented.

The North West Commissioning Support (NWCSU) Registration Authority (GM Team) who provides Smartcard support to pharmacies are faced with daily challenges with Sponsorship within pharmacies. Currently there is a deficiency in the numbers of registered sponsors supporting pharmacies in Greater Manchester, and a lack of communication when Sponsors move on. This places a strain on the level of RA service that can be provided and has an impact on adherence of both national and local policy and procedures around smartcard sponsorship and governance.

Over the next week, Pharmacy Managers/Lead Pharmacists will be contacted and written to asking for a quick audit form to be completed for current staff. They will also be asked to confirm their wish to be registered as the pharmacy Sponsor, or to nominate someone else to that role. There will also be a requirement to nominate two additional staff members who will take on the role of Local Smartcard Administrators for their pharmacy. These staff members can either be existing smartcard users i.e. dispensing technicians or completely new users without a smartcard.

If a staff member is identified as having a requirement for a new smartcard this can be sorted out very quickly, but will require a visit by a RA Agent to check ID and take a photograph. Details of the exact requirements will be communicated at the time of making the appointment.

On taking on the role of Sponsor or Local Smartcard Administrator, a webinar training session covering RA Policy, Role responsibility and procedures will need to be attended. These will be short sessions lasting no longer than 2 hours. All that is needed to complete the training is access to a PC with an internet connection. If you do not have access to these, we can arrange for you to attend our IT suite (based in Ancoats, Manchester). Full enrolment details will be sent out at a later date.

Please note staff who have been assigned a smart card will also need an NHSmail account to enable them to access RA training modules and updates. To request an NHSmail account contact (NWCSU) - gmcsu@itservicedesk@nhs.net.

For any queries please contact:

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