

Gateway Reference: 04100

Covering letter to General Practices and Pharmacies

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To all general practices and pharmacies

Re Directing of Prescriptions

Patients have the right to choose freely which pharmacy dispenses their prescriptions. We are writing to ask for your help in ensuring that all patients are aware of this right and can exercise it without influence from their general practice or from a pharmacy.

NHS England is concerned that, in a small number of cases, general practices or pharmacies are seeking to influence inappropriately which pharmacy dispenses a patient's medicines, or which pharmacy a patient nominates to receive their prescriptions electronically. We have been working in collaboration with the British Medical Association General Practitioners Committee, General Medical Council, Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC), General Pharmaceutical Council, Pharmacy Voice and NHS Protect to look at ways to ensure patient's rights are not undermined.

We all have a duty to ensure patients rights under the NHS Constitution are met and NHS England take very seriously any attempt to undermine this. We will take action against individuals and contractors to protect patient's rights.

In order to ensure patients are fully informed of their choice we are asking all general practices and pharmacies to display the enclosed poster prominently, as close as practicable to the location where patients receive prescriptions. Pharmacy contractors can obtain additional copies of the poster from the PSNC by contacting shantel.christian@psnc.org.uk. Distance selling and internet pharmacies should display this information prominently on their websites and take reasonable steps to bring this notice to the attention of all patients, for example by including copy of this notice with dispensed medicines that are delivered to patients.

If you are aware of a situation where the right of patients to choose where their

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prescriptions are dispensed is being influenced we would encourage you to take this up, in the first instance, with your Local Medical Committee and Local Pharmaceutical Committee. If the situation cannot be resolved it should be escalated to NHS England via the local office or via england.primarycareops@nhs.net (including Prescription Direction in the subject heading).

Many thanks for your help with this important awareness raising.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Geddes', written in a cursive style.

Dr David Geddes
Head of Primary Care Commissioning
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