

Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership
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Ref: PHA02234

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Email: england.gmtop@nhs.net

IMPORTANT

For the attention of: All Pharmacies and GP Practices in Greater Manchester

Dear Colleague,

RE: PRESCRIPTION DIRECTION ALLEGATIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a shift towards the use of digital services over the past 12 months, and an increase in the uptake of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS). Unfortunately, alongside this there has also been a marked increase in the number of allegations of prescription direction being received from different sources, relating to both pharmacies and GP practices across the Greater Manchester footprint. These mainly comprise of instances where it is alleged that patient EPS nominations have been changed either by a pharmacy or GP practice:

- without the patient's explicit consent, or
- where patients have allegedly been influenced to choose one pharmacy over another (either by another pharmacy or a GP practice); or
- where patients have allegedly been actively discouraged from choosing a particular pharmacy (either by another pharmacy or a GP practice)

It is reported that patient care has been significantly detrimentally affected in some cases, e.g. where delays in obtaining medication have occurred while the nomination issues are identified, investigated and rectified.

Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership takes the matter of prescription direction very seriously. We must discharge our duty to ensure that patients' rights under the NHS Constitution and also for data protection are met. This assurance may be by way of taking appropriate contractual action against contractors to protect those rights, where evidence of prescription direction or switching patient nominations without consent is found.

The attached poster was first circulated in 2016 when allegations of prescription direction were on the rise across England. If it is not already, please ensure that the poster is displayed in your waiting area. It is essential that pharmacy and GP practice staff are aware of patients' right to choose and are able to effectively and consistently communicate this message to patients to minimise the risk of such incidents taking place in future.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

Primary Care Pharmacy Team - Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership