



Third Party Medication Ordering Apps

The Medicines Management Team have received a number of concerns about third party apps, including ones which are “NHS approved” e.g. ECHO, which are being used by patients to submit medication requests. The concerns that have been raised are:

- **Safety:** Many of these apps allow patients to request any prescription-only medicine, i.e., the item does not need to be on the patient’s repeat list. There are both local and national reports of this resulting in inappropriate and inaccurate medication requests being submitted to GP practices
- **Information Governance:** One of our member practices received a request from one of the apps on behalf of a patient, however, the request had been sent to the wrong GP practice. The request contained the patient’s name, address, NHS number, date of birth and medication details
- **Regulatory Governance:** The owners of these apps do not come under the jurisdiction of the GMC, GPhC or CQC
- **Time:** When patients submit their medication request via an app they are received by the GP practice by email. Requests received in this manner are more time consuming for Practices to process.
- **Appropriate ordering:** Practices have worked hard over the past 18 months to limit third party ordering of repeat prescriptions. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of items of medication being (over) ordered. There is a concern that these “third party apps” will undo much of the hard work undertaken by the Practices in stopping routine “third party ordering”.

Our advice:

- 1) Advise patients who are keen to order their medication electronically that they can use the GP online ordering system (SystemOnline/Patient Access) or NHS app (available via Google Play and the Apple app stores) which links directly to their patient record. This allows the patient to only order medication which is on their “current repeats”. This is the safest system as patients cannot order medication that has been stopped.
- 2) Contact patients using “third party apps” and explain that the practice does not accept third party requests, including those via “third party apps” but that they are still able to order their medication online by the routes listed above.

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