

All you need to know about: Real-time Exemption Checking

PSNC Director of NHS Services, Alastair Buxton, addresses some misconceptions about a new digital method of checking prescription charge exemptions.



The Department of Health and Social Care has announced a series of measures to reduce fraud against the NHS; this includes digitising information on exemption from prescription charges, via a project being undertaken by NHS Digital and the NHS Business Services Authority (NHS BSA), in collaboration with pharmacy PMR system suppliers. **This project is known as Real-time Exemption Checking (RTEC).**

PSNC believes there will be clear benefits to pharmacy teams and patients when RTEC is rolled out, reducing the burden of the current prescription charge exemption system which pharmacy contractors are required to operate.

How will RTEC work?

The system uses data on people's prescription charge exemption status, held by the NHS BSA. The check of the NHS BSA data will usually occur automatically at the time the prescription is being processed in the PMR system to produce dispensing labels, but PMR suppliers have some flexibility about the point that the data will be requested from the NHS BSA using an Application Programming Interface (API) built into the PMR system.

Pharmacy staff will not normally need to check the patient's exemption status more than once, but a second check will be possible, if the patient queries the initial status returned by the NHS BSA system. If the patient believes they are exempt from prescription charges, but RTEC returns no exemption information, the patient will complete a declaration on an EPS token in the normal way.

If a prescription is confirmed by RTEC as exempt, it will be treated as such by the NHS BSA and no

The benefits of RTEC

It is expected that RTEC will:

- reduce the risks of contractor loss caused by pharmacy staff inadvertently submitting EPS prescriptions with a paid status when the category should have been exempt;
- enable a reduction in the number of EPS tokens which have to be printed, completed by patients and then be sent from pharmacies to the NHS BSA;
- provide a more efficient digital process for pharmacy staff, reducing the time spent helping patients complete declarations, checking physical evidence of exemption status and sorting tokens for submission to the NHS BSA;
- reduce the risk to the NHS of prescription fraud due to a decrease in false prescription exemption claims; and
- increase convenience for patients, as there will be less need for them to provide physical proof of exemption from prescription charges.

further prescription exemption checks will be applied and the patient will not need to complete a declaration on an EPS token.

Roll-out plans

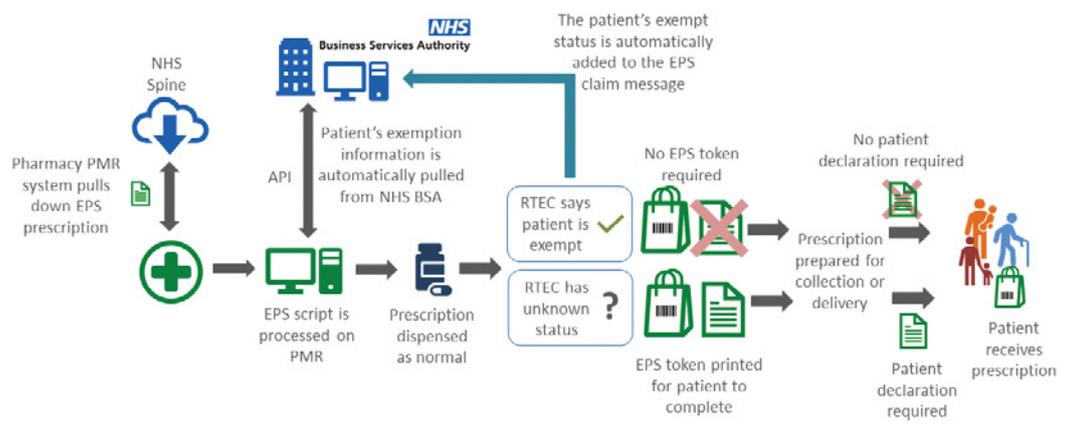
The system will be rolled out in phases:

- Phase One will comprise maternity, medical, pre-payment, low income scheme and HMRC exemptions;
- Phase Two will include all Department for Work and Pensions exemptions, including Universal Credit when they become available; and
- Once the first two phases are complete,

NHS Digital plans to conduct a prioritisation and costing exercise to explore the possibility of including the Education and Ministry of Defence exemptions in the system.

Testing

NHS Digital and NHS BSA are working with several PMR suppliers to test this functionality; a pilot with one supplier scheduled for late 2018. PSNC will provide further information on progress with the testing and rollout of RTEC as it becomes available.



Pharmacy notice board

In this section of Community Pharmacy News we have highlighted some key notices for you and your team to be aware of in the coming weeks and months.



Update to adrenaline auto-injectors validation protocol

Following on from the validation protocol for dispensing adrenaline 150 microgram auto-injectors brought in last month, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has now issued a revised protocol which comes into effect immediately.

The latest information can be found on our dedicated adrenaline resource page: psnc.org.uk/adrenaline



Changes to the way you access the Drug Tariff

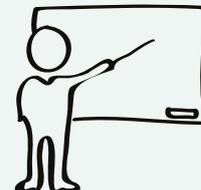
NHS England will stop automatically sending monthly hard copies of the Drug Tariff out to community pharmacies after the January 2019 edition. Pharmacy teams can instead view the Drug Tariff online.

However, you can request to continue receiving the monthly hard copy. Find details here: ow.ly/dz2q30mGJmD



Leadership training for community pharmacy

The Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) and the NHS Leadership Academy are offering an interactive leadership course to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working in community pharmacy.



The Mary Seacole Leadership programme is designed to help you feel more confident in your leadership skills by helping you to identify your strengths and areas for improvement and finding the right style to suit you. Find out more at: ow.ly/FLdR30mCcQV



Obesity and cancer resource

- Cancer Research UK has published the latest edition of their pharmacy Cancer insight resource, which focuses on obesity.
- It contains answers to common patient questions, practical tips on how to discuss weight management with patients who are overweight or obese and a campaign poster.
- Free copies can be ordered and/or downloaded from: www.cancerresearchuk.org

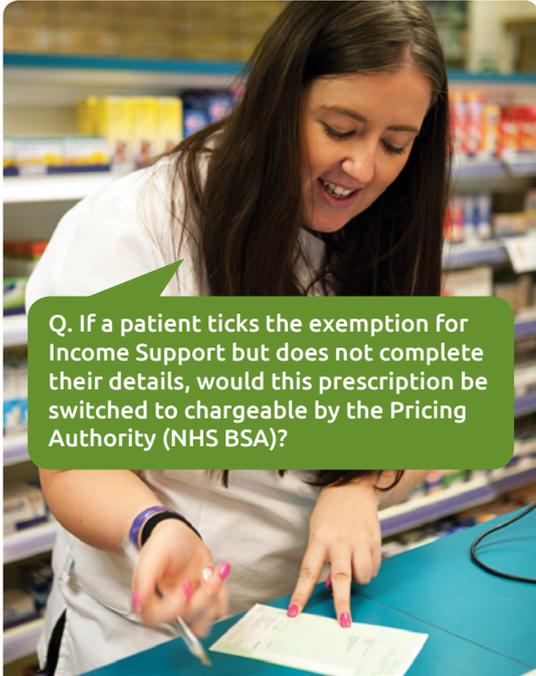


Gluten-free prescribing

As of 4th December 2018, gluten-free foods permitted on the NHS will be restricted to bread and mixes only. PSNC has created a briefing to explain what this change means for community pharmacy teams: psnc.org.uk/GFbriefing

End of month submission webinar: Your questions answered

Following PSNC's prescription submission webinar in September, our Dispensing and Supply Team is working to respond to the questions you posed on the night but they didn't have time to answer.



Q. If a patient ticks the exemption for Income Support but does not complete their details, would this prescription be switched to chargeable by the Pricing Authority (NHS BSA)?

A. The NHS Business Services Authority (NHS BSA) advises that where a patient is exempt because they receive Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, receive income-based Jobseeker's allowance, is entitled to or named on valid NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate or has a partner in receipt of Pension Credit guarantee credit, they should complete the details of the person receiving the benefit in Part 1 which includes name, National Insurance number and date of birth.

If these details were omitted but a tick was placed against the correct exemption category in part 1 and a signature was captured in Part 3, the prescription would still be processed for payment and would **NOT** be switched from exempt to chargeable and prescription charge(s) would not be deducted.

Q. Do I need to submit EPS RA Tokens for electronic repeat dispensing at the end of each month?

A. The NHS Business Services Authority (NHS BSA) advises that where a patient is exempt because they receive Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, receive income-based Jobseeker's allowance, is entitled to or named on valid NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate or has a partner in receipt of Pension Credit guarantee credit, they should complete the details of the person receiving the benefit in Part 1 which includes name, National Insurance number and date of birth.

If these details were omitted but a tick was placed against the correct exemption category in part 1 and a signature was captured in Part 3, the prescription would still be processed for payment and would **NOT** be switched from exempt to chargeable and prescription charge(s) would not be deducted.



Q. I have items referred back repeatedly on a monthly basis, could something be done to let the prescriber know not to re-prescribe the item in future?

A. If a copy of a prescription has been returned to you as 'disallowed' then it would be advisable to make the prescriber aware that this product is not permitted on NHS prescriptions.

However, if the prescription was returned for clarification due to insufficient or unclear endorsements, this is down to the pharmacy team not endorsing the prescription appropriately. On a referred back prescription there should be a code with a specific reason listed underneath the image of the prescription which should explain what information the NHS BSA require to be able to process your prescription for payment.

If you are still unsure of why the item has been sent back or do not know what needs to be endorsed, please contact PSNC with details of the prescription (i.e. the product, quantity supplied, and the endorsements used) so that we can investigate this further for you.

For more information on prescription returns, disallowed prescriptions and return codes please see psnc.org.uk/returns

Look out for more of your questions next month...

If you would like more information on this topic, the PSNC Dispensing and Supply Team will be happy to help (0203 1220 810 or email info@psnc.org.uk).

Drug Tariff Watch: December 2018

Part VIIIA additions

- Tenofovir 245mg tablets (30) - Category A
- Co-trimoxazole 80mg/400mg/5ml solution for infusion ampoules (10) – *Aspen Pharma Trading Ltd*
- Dexamethasone 8mg tablets (30) – *Teva UK Ltd*
- Dexibuprofen 300mg tablets (60) – *Seractil*
- Fondaparinux sodium 1.5mg/0.3ml solution for injection pre-filled syringes (10) – *Arixtra*
- Fondaparinux sodium 10mg/0.8ml solution for injection prefilled syringes (10) – *Arixtra*
- Fondaparinux sodium 2.5mg/0.5ml solution for injection pre-filled syringes (10) – *Arixtra*
- Fondaparinux sodium 5mg/0.4ml solution for injection prefilled syringes (10) – *Arixtra*
- Fondaparinux sodium 7.5mg/0.6ml solution for injection pre-filled syringes (10) – *Arixtra*
- Gentamicin 20mg/2ml solution for injection ampoules (5) – *Wockhardt UK Ltd*
- Gentamicin 5mg/1ml solution for injection ampoules (5) – *Gentamicin Intrathecal*
- Glycopyrronium bromide powder for solution for iontophoresis (3g) – *AMCo*
- Heparin sodium 5,000units/1ml solution for injection ampoules (10) – *Wockhardt UK Ltd*
- Lidocaine 200mg/20ml (1%) solution for injection vials (10) – *Hameln Pharmaceuticals Ltd*
- Lidocaine 400mg/20ml (2%) solution for injection vials (10) – *Hameln Pharmaceuticals Ltd*
- Liquid paraffin liquid (150ml) – *Bell, Sons & Co (Druggists) Ltd*
- Liquid paraffin liquid (2000ml) – *J M Loveridge Ltd*
- Liquid paraffin liquid (5000ml) – *J M Loveridge Ltd*
- Metronidazole 500mg/100ml infusion 100ml bags (20) – *AAH Pharmaceuticals Ltd*
- Morphine sulfate 5mg/5ml solution for injection ampoules (10) – *Torbay Pharmaceuticals*
- Octreotide 1mg/5ml solution for injection vials ■ (1) – *Pfizer Ltd*
- Octreotide 50micrograms/1ml solution for injection ampoules (5) – *Sandostatin*
- Paracetamol 1g/100ml solution for infusion vials (10) – *Accord Healthcare Ltd*
- Phenobarbital 60mg/1ml solution for injection ampoules (10) – *Martindale Pharmaceuticals Ltd*
- Sodium bicarbonate 8.4% (1mmol/ml) solution for injection 250ml bottles (10) – *AAH Pharmaceuticals Ltd*

KEY:

- Special container
- Item requiring reconstitution
- * This pack only (others already available)

- Sodium chloride 30% solution for infusion 100ml vials (10) – *Torbay Pharmaceuticals*
- Sodium chloride 30% solution for infusion 50ml vials (10) – *Torbay Pharmaceuticals*
- Sodium valproate 300mg/3ml solution for injection ampoules (5) – *Episenta*
- Sodium valproate 400mg/4ml solution for injection ampoules (5) – *Wockhardt UK Ltd*
- Tenofovir 123mg tablets (30) – *Viread*
- Tenofovir 163mg tablets (30) – *Viread*
- Tenofovir 204mg tablets (30) – *Viread*
- Tobramycin 240mg/6ml solution for injection vials ■ (1) – *Pfizer Ltd*
- Tobramycin 80mg/2ml solution for injection vials ■ (1) – *Nebcin*
- Tobramycin 80mg/2ml solution for injection vials (5) – *Pfizer Ltd*
- Tranexamic acid 500mg/5ml solution for injection ampoules (10) – *Cyklokapron*
- Triamcinolone hexacetonide 20mg/1ml suspension for injection ampoules (10) – *Intrapharm Laboratories Ltd*
- Vancomycin 1g powder for solution for infusion vials (10) – *Flynn Pharma Ltd*
- Vancomycin 500mg powder for solution for infusion vials (10) – *Flynn Pharma Ltd*

For a full list of the upcoming Drug Tariff changes, please visit: ow.ly/kooP30mCPoj

Part IX deletions

Product	Size, Type, Product Code
Snap dressing kit - Gauze	All sizes
Reusable Pens - AllStar	All types and sizes
Vacuum Pumps - Owen Mumford Ltd - Rapport Premier	SM2200
Leg Bags - L.In.C Medical Systems - LINC-Flo sterile leg bag with lever tap, adjustable inlet tube	350ml bag (LM350AD-L)
Belts - AMI Medical Ltd - Suportx Ostomy/Hernia Support Belt	All except 15cm depth
Colostomy bags - ConvaTec Ltd - Colodress Plus (Stomahesive Wafer) Closed Pouches	Opaque and clear starter holes
Colostomy bags - ConvaTec Ltd - Esteem Closed Pouches with Integral filter	All types and sizes
Colostomy bags - ConvaTec Ltd - Esteem+ Closed Pouches with Integral filter X Small - opaque	All sizes
Ileostomy bags - ConvaTec Ltd - Esteem One-Piece Convex Drainable Pouch with InvisiClose Outlet	All types and sizes
Pressure plates/shields - Salts Healthcare - Convex Plate for Light White Bag	All sizes
Pressure plates/shields - Salts Healthcare - Plastic Retaining Shield Single	833008
Two piece ostomy systems - ConvaTec Ltd - Esteem Synergy ileostomy bag	S1007F, S1021F, S1212F, S1221F, S1222F and S1231F
Two piece ostomy systems - Oakmed Ltd - Option Connect 2 colostomy bag with filter, Clear	JH520
Two piece ostomy systems - Oakmed Ltd - Option Connect 2 ileostomy bag with filter, Clear	JH220 and JH120