



Frequently Asked Questions: Repeat Prescription Changes

We have put together some frequently asked questions to answer any queries that you may have around our **Repeat Prescriptions: Understanding the changes that affect you.**

Why is this happening?

This initiative aims to reduce the waste of medicines that are routinely ordered but not needed.

Prescribers, district nurses and practices pharmacists have all highlighted the significant waste and safety issues related to current repeat ordering systems.

GP practices will be able to monitor repeat prescriptions more accurately for these patients, ensuring their repeat medications remain appropriate for their individual medical conditions, which often change over time.

This new system will also give you more control. Under the current system, many patients have reported that they have built up a large stock of unused medicines. These medicines are often not stored safely nor used within their expiry date.

This is a real safety issue and we need to end this. So, as well as introducing safer prescribing systems, the scheme will also save money, enabling more vital NHS funds to be spent on priority healthcare benefiting a greater number of Harrogate and Rural District residents.

What is happening?

The way medications are ordered is changing. You (or your carer, nominated family member or friend) will have to order your medication directly from the GP practice yourself.

From September 2019, local GP practices will not accept prescription requests from pharmacies or companies for most patients. (These requests will not be processed).

Whilst it is difficult to define which patients may require support, in general it will include any patient who is affected by a condition to such an extent that it affects their ability to order their medication safely and these patients should continue to be supported by their community pharmacy when requesting their medicines. This may include the following groups of patients:

- Some patients with mental health issues (but not all).
- Patients who have difficulty communicating verbally.
- Patients with learning difficulties (but not all).
- Patients who are visually impaired
- Housebound patients and those who are unable to visit the practice to order their medicines, who do not have internet access or are unable to use the online ordering system.

However some patients in the above groups may value their independence and be capable of ordering their medicines and some patients may have a carer or relative who can order their medicines for them.



When is this happening?

The changes will take place from September 2019.

How can I order my repeat prescriptions?

The easiest ways to order your prescription is online.

From September 2019 the surgeries will not accept repeat prescription requests from pharmacies or appliance companies.

If you need to request a repeat prescription you can only do this by one of the following approved ways:

- Order online (the easiest and safest way)
- Via email (this service is only available at some GP practices)
- Via the repeat prescription box at your GP practice
- Via post to your GP practice

(you can tear off the white slip on the right hand side of your prescription, tick what you need and post it or drop it into your GP practice).

How will I know if this affects me?

If someone currently orders your medicines on your behalf then you may be affected. We would encourage you to talk to your GP practice or pharmacy and be supported in looking at other options available to you for ordering your medication.

If you already order your medication directly from your GP practice yourself, you will not be affected and do not need to take any action.

Pharmacies that collect prescriptions from GP practices can still do so.

Pharmacies that deliver medications and other items to you can still do so.

It will still take the surgeries 2-3 working days to issue a repeat prescription and then you should allow a further 3 days for the pharmacy to process your prescription, before collecting your medicines from the pharmacy. This allows the pharmacy time to order in your medicines.

After reading the leaflet I would consider myself to be vulnerable – what should I do?

If you consider yourself to be a vulnerable patient once been given the patient information leaflet, we would encourage you to talk to either your GP practice or pharmacy and be supported in looking at other options available to you for ordering your medication rather than to continue with the managed repeat system.



Why is this happening in Harrogate?

The issue of medicines waste is a national issue, with over £300million a year spent by the NHS on unused and unnecessary medicines.

Many CCGs across the country are in the process of, or have run medicines waste campaigns, with the changes in how to order repeat prescriptions being identified as one of the key ways with which to tackle this issue.

Medicine waste is everyone's responsibility and there are small changes you can make to help reduce the amount of medicines being wasted. These savings could be reinvested into more front line care and services for the benefit of all.

Wasted prescription medicines cost nearly £1million every year across Harrogate and the Rural District.

Based on average costs that money could pay for an extra:

- 1,058 days of care in an Intensive Treatment Unit (ITU) for critically ill patients
- 5,389 outpatient appointments with a Consultant
- 1,764 days of treatment in a Special Care Baby Unit for seriously ill babies
- 20,000 GP appointments
- 99,700 blood tests
- 20 community nurses
- 16,363 hearing test
- 600,000 inhalers for asthmatics

These changes were implemented in the Knaresborough and Ripon areas approximately 12 months ago and the feedback we have received from community pharmacies has overall been positive. Their staff have been freed from some of the administrative burden of the managed repeat system and have more time to offer other services such as counselling patients on new medication and offering Medication Use Reviews (MURs) which have been demonstrated to improve medication adherence which is really important in maximising health outcomes for patients.

GP practices in Ripon and Knaresborough also reported the changes made the ordering of repeat medicines safer and more efficient.

Is this just about saving money?

We are addressing some very real medicines safety issues, but it will also save vital NHS funds which can be better spent on priority healthcare benefitting a greater number of Harrogate and Rural District residents.



How will this improve safety?

The new system should give patients better control over medication ordering. It will avoid stock piling of medication which can result in patients being confused about which medicines to take. In addition, it should prevent medication that has been stopped from being re-ordered by mistake.

Who have you engaged with about this?

On Wednesday 8th May 2019 we invited a representative(s) from each community pharmacy, GP practice manager, GP prescribing lead, GP practice pharmacist and Patient Participant Group member(s) from each GP practice to attend a meeting to discuss medicine waste and repeat prescription dispensing in the Harrogate area.

An agreement was reached from those who attended the meeting to proceed with stopping managed repeat services in Harrogate, with the exception of vulnerable patients, with a start date of September 2019.

A patient information leaflet has been created to be given out with every prescription over the next few months. The information leaflet explains what is changing for patients who currently use the service and suggestions of other ways to order their repeat prescriptions.

Who do I speak to about my repeat prescription?

If you have any queries about your repeat prescription, please speak to your GP or practice pharmacist.

How do I register for online services?

Please ask the reception team at your GP practice for an online services registration form. This will need to be completed and returned back to your GP practice along with 2 forms of identification.

What can I use online services for?

Did you know that since April 2015, you don't have to wait on the phone to speak to your GP practice? Just like online banking you can look at your GP records on a computer, a tablet or a smartphone, using a website or an app. You can choose to:

- Book and cancel appointments with your doctor or nurse online, when it suits you. Your surgery will choose which appointments can be booked online.
- Order repeat prescriptions online. Some patients have found that they save money and time as they don't need to make a special trip to their surgery to order repeat prescriptions.
- Look at part of your GP records online. You can look at your records whenever you want, even from the comfort of your home, and find answers to questions you may have without ringing your doctor.

Online services are free to use and are just another way of contacting your surgery.



How do I order my repeat prescription via the SystmOnline: Patient Online Service?

Once registered with your GP practice for online services, you will be given a username and password.

You can access the online ordering service via the online portal at: <https://systmonline.tpp-uk.com> or via your GP practice website.

Once logged in you should:

1. Under the “your medication” section – Click the request medication link.
2. Select the medication required by clicking on the box in the left-hand column.
3. Check the details of each medication carefully to ensure that any recent changes have been accounted for. A message can be sent to the GP practice via the Medication Request Notes field on the next screen if needed.
4. Click **continue**.
5. If you need to include further information with the request for a specific medication type the details into the Notes box next to that specific medication. When providing this information, you should bear in mind that it may be visible to all practice staff.
6. If you need to include further information with the request type the details into the Medication Request Notes field towards the bottom of the page. When providing this information, you should bear in mind that it may be visible to all practice staff.
7. Click **Request Medication**. The Medication Order Summary is displayed, stating that request has been sent to the GP practice to re-prescribe the item(s).
8. You can click **Print Confirmation** to print out confirmation of this request.

A video tutorial can be found here: <https://youtu.be/mbGPOCP4P7w>

What if I need help using the SystmOnline: Patient Online Service?

GP practice staff have been trained to support any patients who may have difficulty using the new SystmOnline: Patient Online Service website and smartphone app.

You can speak to your GP practice if you have any concerns and they will arrange for someone to discuss any issues and provide advice.

In addition, there are a number of useful video tutorials available which can be found here: <https://youtu.be/mbGPOCP4P7w>



Do I have to use SystmOnline: Patient Online Service?

No, you can still order your repeat prescription:

- Via the repeat prescription box at your GP practice
- Via post to your GP practice

(You can tear off the white slip on the right hand side of your prescription, tick what you need and post it or drop it into your GP practice.)

I have medicines at home that I don't need. How can I return them?

Please return unused or out of date medicines to your local pharmacy for safe disposal.

It is really important you don't try to discard them yourself.

How do I provide feedback?

Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group would welcome patient feedback whether positive or negative at:

Email: hardccg.patientrelations@nhs.net

Telephone: 01423 799300 (during office hours)

Website: www.harrogateandruraldistrictccg.nhs.uk