

Dear Colleague

PRESCRIPTION STATIONERY– PATIENT SIGNATURES ON PRESCRIPTION FORMS AND UPDATED PRIVACY NOTICE

Summary

1. This Circular advises NHS Boards and community pharmacy contractors that patient signatures are no longer required on the majority of prescription forms. It also provides an updated privacy notice for display in all community pharmacies.

Background

2. The requirement for patients or their representatives to sign prescription forms was temporarily suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic as an operational matter to reduce the risk of transmission.

Details

3. It has been agreed with the pharmacy contractor body, Community Pharmacy Scotland, and NHS National Services Scotland, that the temporary suspension should now continue as normal practice.

4. With immediate effect, patient signatures are required only in the following situations:

- Where the prescription is for a controlled drug; or
- Where, in the pharmacist's judgement, a signature from the patient or their representative is desirable; or
- Where the prescription is generated by a GP practice in England and prescription charges exemption status needs to be selected.

22 September 2022

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards

For information

NHS Directors of Pharmacy
Director of Practitioner
Services, NHS NSS

Enquiries to:

Pharmacy & Medicines
Division
1st Floor East Rear
St Andrew's House
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG
Email:
PharmacyTeam@gov.scot

www.gov.scot

5. In all other situations the form does not need to be signed by the patient, a representative or a pharmacy staff member. This advice applies only to NHS prescriptions.

6. An updated privacy notice is provided as an Annex to this circular. It is vital that all community pharmacies must display this privacy notice in a prominent position within the pharmacy as this provides members of the public with information about the use of data and complies with their right to be informed about data sharing.

7. The content of this Circular has been agreed with Community Pharmacy Scotland.

Action

8. NHS Boards are asked to copy this Circular to all community pharmacy contractors on their pharmaceutical list. Community pharmacies are asked to display the updated Privacy Notice.

Yours sincerely



Alison Strath
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
Pharmacy & Medicines Division

NHS Community Pharmacy Services



Use of data

In order to provide NHS services provided directly from a Community Pharmacy, this pharmacy will collect and retain data securely on individuals accessing the services.

Sharing data

The pharmacy is required to advise NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) when a consultation has been undertaken for any Community Pharmacy service provided on behalf of an NHS Health Board, if referral has been made to another healthcare provider and to provide details of any items supplied for a NHS Community Pharmacy supported service. This data is sent electronically or by paper, stored securely on a digital platform and enables NSS to calculate payment to the pharmacy for the service they have provided. NSS may also use this information to assure accurate payments and for the prevention and detection of fraud and share it with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds.

Through the secure digital platform, NSS shares data with Public Health Scotland (PHS) to produce statistics which are used to assist in the provision and improvement of NHS services and improve the health of the people of Scotland. More details about these organisations is given below.

NHS National Services Scotland (NSS)

NSS is a public organisation created in Scotland under Section 10 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978. Practitioner Services is the business unit within NSS that provides services on behalf of Health Boards to support General Practitioners, Community Pharmacies and Dispensing Contractors, Dentists and Opticians delivering primary care across Scotland.

Public Health Scotland (PHS)

Public Health Scotland (PHS) is a national public health body established by Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). As a partnership between national and local government, PHS enable and support local and national bodies to work together to improve health and wellbeing in communities.

Under EU and UK data protection law, PHS and NSS are joint Controllers and both organisations have equal access and responsibility to where the information is held securely to allow the delivery of their respective statutory obligations.

Where to get more information

If you want more information about this and other uses of data, you can:

- Read the NSS Practitioner Services Data Protection Notice available at <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/publications/practitioner-services-data-protection-notice/>
- Read Public Health Scotland's Data Protection Notice available at <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/our-privacy-notice/>
- Visit the NHS Inform website – How the NHS handles your personal health information at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights/confidentiality-and-data-protection/how-the-nhs-handles-your-personal-health-information>
- Contact your local health board – every health board has an NHS Data Protection Officer. Contact details are at - <https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights/confidentiality-and-data-protection/how-the-nhs-handles-your-personal-health-information#data>