

# Blaenavon Medical Practice

## Prescribing Policy

This policy explains the practice's procedures and individual's responsibility in the prescribing process. The majority of prescriptions will be for medications required regularly ie 'on repeat'.

Repeat prescribing enables patients to obtain further supplies of medicines without routinely having to see the prescriber, thereby reducing unnecessary consultations. It is an essential part of everyday health care within the NHS, and accounts for about 60-75% of all prescriptions written by general practitioners (GPs), and 80% of their cost. Approximately half of a practice's population will be receiving repeat prescriptions.

The presence of a robust repeat prescribing system is a proxy quality marker for general practice care. This is recognised within the General Medical Services (GMS) Contract<sup>1</sup> by the inclusion of several quality indicators related to medicines management. Benefits of a well managed system include:

- Improved quality of prescribing
- Improved patient convenience and access to the medicines they need
- Improved patient safety
- Better and more appropriate use of relevant professional and practice staff skills and time
- Decreased GP workload
- Optimal efficiency in the processes involved
- Increased patient/carer involvement and responsibility
- Better use of NHS resources/minimising waste

### **Clinical Responsibility**

1. The clinical control of prescriptions is the responsibility of the prescriber signing the repeat prescription.

2. This document is available to patients, doctors, practice staff, community pharmacists and nurses who assist in patient safety and the management of the prescribing process.

3. The decision to transfer a medication from an acute to repeat prescription must always be made by the doctor or practice-based non-medical prescriber (NMP) eg practice pharmacist and practice nurses, after careful consideration of whether or not the medication has been effective, well-tolerated and is required long term.

4. For all changes of medications, any medication no longer required must be removed from the current prescribing screen with reason for removal entered when prompted. This is the responsibility of the prescriber changing the medications. If a patient has a reaction to the new medication/dosage, then the medication must be

removed from the patient's current prescribing list, and a corresponding read-coded entry made.

5. It is the responsibility of all clinical and administrative staff to ensure the patient understands how to order repeat medication and the repeat prescribing process through verbal explanation and the relevant information in the practice leaflet.

6. All medications prescribed to the patient will be recorded in the patients' computerised medical records, whether this be in surgery or following a home visit.

### **Requests for a repeat prescription (Request and Collection)**

1. The procedure is advertised in the practice on the **notice board**, in the **practice leaflet**, and on the **website**.

2. Repeat prescription requests handed in to reception will be available within 48 hours from the time of receipt of the request. Repeat prescription requests handed into the community pharmacies will be available within 72 hours; excluding weekends and bank holidays.

3. The patient or their representative should request a repeat prescription to minimise the potential opportunities for fraud.

4. **Community pharmacies** providing **repeat medication services** operated in co-operation with local prescribers provide professional support to promote the rational, safe, effective and economic use of medicines. As such it is expected that they are rigorous in checking which medications are required, question the reason for not requesting regular medication and only order '*when required*' medication if the patient confirms it is needed. A comprehensive audit trail is required to identify each request and supply. Any concerns should be raised with the practice. Prescribers should clearly document reasons for changes of medications in order to deal with any queries that may arise.

5. **Repeat Prescription collection services** encompass any scheme whereby a community pharmacy receives prescriptions other than directly from the patient, their carer or representative. All requests for repeat prescriptions must be initiated by the patient or their representative, and be made directly to the surgery unless the pharmacy is offering a repeat medication service as detailed above.

6. Where a repeat prescription collection service is in operation, the practice will ensure an audit trail is in place to identify which prescriptions have been handed over to a particular pharmacy.

7. Patients are encouraged to use the repeat slip attached to their previous prescription to order repeat medication. Patients without a repeat slip should complete a pro-forma which is held in the surgery. Once the repeat prescription is issued, the patient will have a new repeat slip from which future prescriptions should be ordered.

8. Patients are encouraged to tell their GP if they have stopped taking repeat medications, so that the system can be amended accordingly.

9. Repeat prescriptions should not be routinely issued to patients more than 7 days in advance of the next due date, unless repeat dispensing is in place or a written explanation is supplied eg going on holiday.

10. The practice has a standard time limit for collection of repeat prescriptions. If the prescription has not been collected within 28 days, the prescription clerk will remove this from the collection area and mark the patients' computer and manual records accordingly.

11. Medication is only issued if a patient request is made, e.g. by ticking the medication on the repeat slip. If a regular medication is not requested the prescribing clerk may seek to clarify this with the patient or patient's representative. It is not assumed that every item on the form is required. ***Patients should be advised to put a line through medication not needed to avoid any ambiguity.***

12. The repeat slip may be

- a) left at the surgery in the secure prescription box to maintain patient confidentiality.
- b) Alternatively requests are accepted by post, if the patient sends in an SAE which allows the return of the prescription when ready.
- c) By internet using '***my health online***'
- d) Handed in to the community pharmacy offering a repeat medication service as described above.

13. Telephone requests are not routinely accepted (to avoid errors and for the safety of the patient). Any patients who are unable to attend the surgery to order medication should contact the surgery to make alternative arrangements.

14. There is a system in place which ensures the *bona fides* of a patient representative, ie a patient's representative is asked for the patient's name and address before a repeat prescription is handed over. If several prescriptions are being handed over, each sheet is checked individually to ensure they all belong to the patient.

15. Repeat prescriptions should not be handed out to children under the age of 12 years.