

NHS Connecting for Health Electronic Prescription Service (Release 2)

What is the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS)?

The EPS has been designed to reduce the paper administration associated with current prescribing and dispensing processes by enabling prescriptions to be generated, transmitted and received electronically. Dispensing contractors will also be able to submit reimbursement endorsements electronically to support payment claims for medication and appliances supplied. Over time, the need for paper prescriptions will reduce significantly. This will create a system that is potentially more efficient and focused on the needs of the patient.

Release 2 of the EPS will introduce some changes to existing business processes both in the GP practice and in the pharmacy, the extent of the benefits and the changes to local processes will depend on current dispensary processes.

EPS Release 2 features the following functionalities:

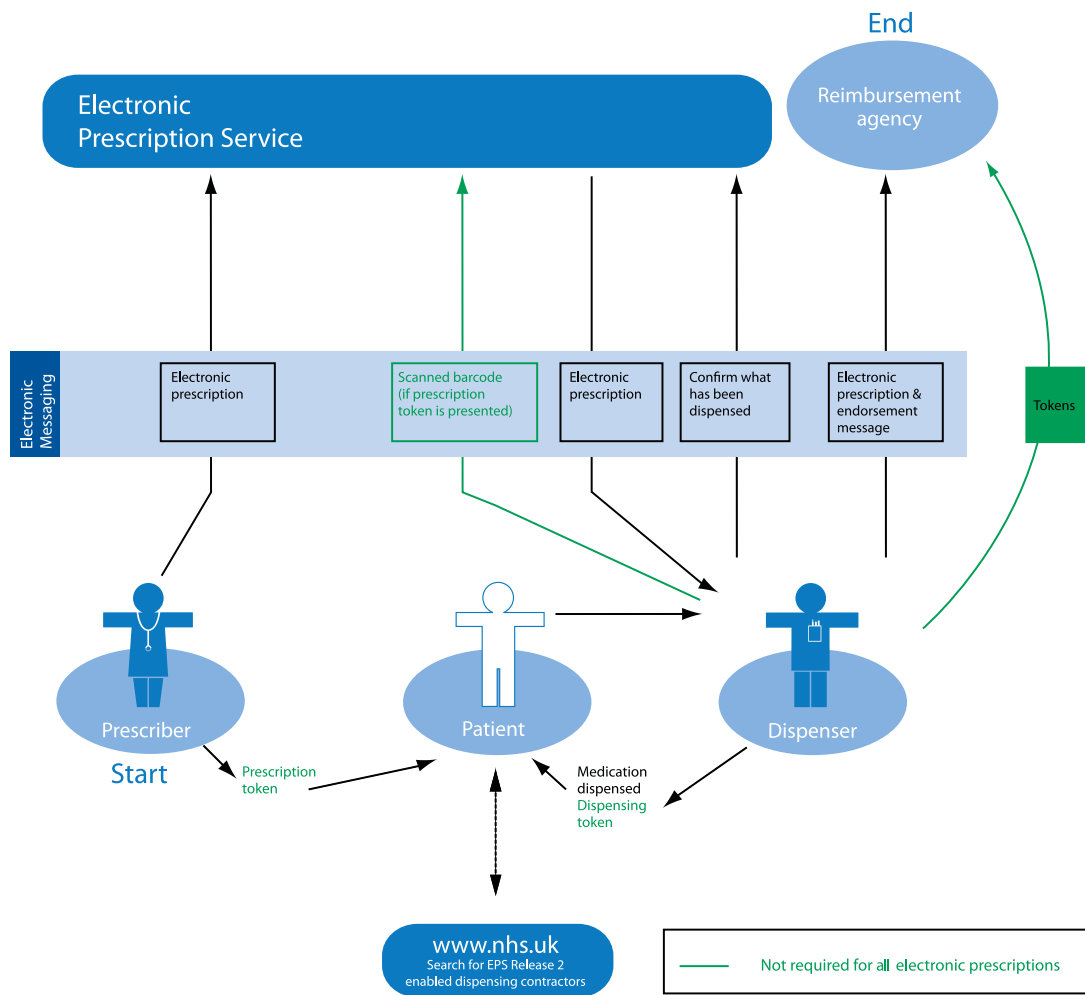
- Advanced electronic signatures on the electronic prescriptions
- The ability for a patient to nominate a dispenser
- The electronic submission of reimbursement endorsement messages
- Electronic cancellation of prescriptions

The EPS has the potential to increase the efficiency and accuracy of the dispensing process.



Diagram 1 - The Electronic Prescription Service (Release 2)

(Diagram detail kindly supplied by the NHS Connecting for Health EPS team)



EPS Release 2 Business Process Guidance for initial implementers is available to download or order from: <http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/eps/staff/guidance/release2guide.pdf>

Advanced electronic signatures

One of the fundamental changes between Release 1 and Release 2 of the EPS is the ability for prescribers to apply advanced electronic signatures to prescription messages. An advanced electronic signature is unique to an individual user and is applied using the individual's Smartcard and passcode. It is the application of the advanced electronic signature to the electronic message that qualifies it as an electronic prescription.

Prescription types out of scope for EPS Release 2

The following prescribing models are not supported and, therefore, still require a hand-signed FP10 paper prescription:

- Scenarios where the prescriber does not have access to the EPS (for example home visits and out of hours)
- Personal administration of medication
- Private prescriptions
- Bulk prescriptions for a school or institution
- Controlled drugs – Schedule 1, 2 or 3 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations
- Scenarios when the patient chooses not have an electronic prescription
- In the initial stages of the EPS, where a patient has not nominated a dispensing contractor
- Where the prescription contains one of the limited number of items that are not directly expressible using the NHS Dictionary of Medicines and Devices (dm+d)

For these prescription types, prescribers should still issue a hand-signed FP10 prescription form. Pharmacists should ensure that these prescriptions comply with the legal requirements for a paper prescription.

Pharmacy System Requirements

Pharmacy computer systems must comply with NHS Connecting for Health Common Assurance Process Electronic Prescription Service accreditation requirements.

Pharmacy systems should be able to provide the following functionality:

- Routine dispensing
- Repeat dispensing
- Monitored dose dispensing
- Instalment dispensing
- Decision Support (drug-drug interactions, drug-disease interactions, duplicate therapy warnings, BNF warnings etc)
- Pharmacy intervention recording
- Medicine Use Review (MUR) Support

