

Guidance for managing acute prescriptions for care home residents, where there is an urgent need.

This guidance is intended to help ensure that residents in care homes receive urgent, acute medication in a timely manner.

For prescriptions generated at the practice

Practice/prescriber must inform the care home that an urgent prescription has been issued in order to treat a resident. Practice reception staff should also be made aware.

Communicating the urgent prescription to the **pharmacy**:

1. **If sent via Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (ETP)** - Prior to sending ETP, the community pharmacy should be contacted to confirm that they are able to dispense/deliver the medication to the care home in a timely manner, (unless there is a local agreement already in place), this should be documented by the practice on the clinical system in the patients record. The pharmacy should also confirm they have downloaded the prescription from the NHS spine.

It is worth considering which is the most appropriate pharmacy to send an urgent prescription – this may not be the resident/care home's regular (nominated) pharmacy. Factors such as geographical distance from the care home, opening hours, ability to deliver (if required) etc need to be considered. The 'One-off' nomination function on the clinical system allows individual prescriptions to be sent to any pharmacy, without affecting the patient's regular nomination. See the links below for more information.

[One-off pharmacy nominations in SystmOne](#)

[One-off pharmacy nominations in EMIS Web¹](#)

2. **If the pharmacy collects the prescription from the practice** - the pharmacy should sign a receipt for the collection of the prescription and confirm they are able to dispense/deliver it in a timely manner.

In both cases, the practice must inform the pharmacy of the urgent nature of the acute prescription.

- Communicating the urgent prescription to the **care home**:

Staff at the care home should be made aware of the following details:

- Resident's name,
- Reason for treatment,
- Details of collection/delivery (e.g., name of the community pharmacy). If the pharmacy has limited opening hours, it is important that care home staff collect in good time.

For prescriptions written at the care home

- Communicating the urgent prescription to the **pharmacy**:

The care home should phone the pharmacy informing them of the urgent nature of the acute prescription before taking it to be dispensed unless you have a local arrangement with your community pharmacy in place.

Additional points:

From April 2020, practices no longer use facsimile (fax) machines for either NHS or patient communications. Fax machines **have been removed** across the NHS in a bid to improve patient safety and cyber security.

- **Care homes should take appropriate action if the prescription/medication does not arrive in a timely manner.**

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¹ EMIS Web guide courtesy of Midlands & Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit