

Patient Nomination – Reminder for Pharmacy Contractors

The NHS Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) allows patients in England to choose a preferred pharmacy, to which their prescriptions can be sent to electronically, and from where they can then collect their medication. As pharmacy contractors, you play a vital role in protecting patients' rights and maintaining the integrity of the NHS Electronic Prescription Service (EPS). Unauthorised changes to a patient's nominated pharmacy can disrupt their care, send prescriptions to the wrong pharmacy, and breach patient consent requirements set out by the Terms of Service in the NHS Pharmaceutical Services Regulations.

Patients must be free to choose their nominated pharmacy. They must not be influenced, persuaded, or incentivised to nominate a specific pharmacy. Information received suggesting that these principles have been disregarded may be reported to the GPhC and treated as misconduct for the purposes of fitness to practise. Should a patient make a complaint to your pharmacy or practice regarding (EPS) Nominations, they should be provided with your own NHS Complaints Procedure. The patient should also be provided with the NHS England Complaints details.

This applies to dispensing practices too for their 'non dispensing' patients. For these patients EPS is the preferred option generally. This provides transparency, convenience and ability to track the prescriptions. The EPS Prescription Tracker can be used by GP practices and pharmacies to check the status and location of any EPS prescription - searching for a particular prescription ID or using the patient's NHS number. This will also feed into the NHSApp for patients to check on their prescriptions' progress.

In addition, patient pharmacy nominations should not be changed by acute hospital teams unless the patient has given clear consent to do so.

Good practice reminders

- Make sure all staff know that changing a nomination must be done with the patient's informed consent.
- Always record evidence of patient consent when changing nominations, for each and every change to a nomination.
- Patients must make their own choice of nominated pharmacy—without any pressure or incentives.
- Report any suspected unauthorised changes promptly to protect both patients and the EPS system.
- Information suggesting unethical nomination practices may be escalated to the GPhC as potential misconduct.

As a reminder the ‘article’ which details pharmacies obligations is:

“Patients must be fully informed about EPS before their nomination is set up and any changes to nominations must only be done at the request of the patient and an audit trail of the request is strongly advised.

Community Pharmacy England (CPE) have developed 4 guiding principles in relation to patient nominations in which all pharmacy teams should understand and adhere to protect patient choice. These are as follows:

- *Plan how EPS works.*
- *Don’t influence the patient.*
- *Update nomination details as soon as possible.*
- *Create a standard operating procedure.”*

NHS England has introduced changes to the GP Contract for 2026/27 relating to patient nominations. For 2026/27, NHS England will amend the core GP contract to strengthen patient choice and pharmacy communications. Practices will be required to reconfirm a patient’s nominated pharmacy when issuing new (non-repeat) prescriptions and ensure referral or triage tools offer a full choice of community pharmacy providers.

Additionally, practices must maintain a dedicated, monitored email address, either new or existing, for communications from community pharmacies when GP Connect is unavailable and for emerging services not yet integrated. This is intended to support patient safety and ensure timely transfer of clinical information without creating significant additional burden. Further details on these amendments can be found here: [NHS England » Changes to the GP Contract in 2026/27](#).

Please ensure that all members of staff are aware of the above and the consequences of switching nominations without a patient’s consent. Further guidance on the above principles can be found by following the links below.

- [We’re all community pharmacy \(cpe.org.uk\)](https://cpe.org.uk)
- [Nomination - what you need to know-NHS-Digital-NHS-England-branded.pdf \(cpe.org.uk\)](#)
- [Useful Links and Information – Arden LPC](#)
- [Useful Links and Information – Herefordshire and Worcestershire LPC](#)