

EPS Security and Confidentiality Frequently Asked Questions

Who will have access to the Electronic Prescription Service?

1. In order to ensure that only authorised personnel are able to access the Electronic Prescription Service, smartcards will be issued to GP surgery staff and community pharmacists (including locums). The smartcard will grant users with different levels of access depending on their function within the prescribing/dispensing process. Essentially, details of the prescription will only be seen by the same people as at present.

Does the barcode contain any information about the patient?

2. No. The barcode represents a unique code which helps the pharmacist to identify the prescription in the Electronic Prescription Service. It does not contain any information about the patient whatsoever.

Will patients need to present proof of ID upon collection of prescriptions when paper is phased out?

3. The checks undertaken by dispensers will remain the same as at present, with the person collecting the prescription being asked to confirm the patient's details.

What security is built into the EPS?

4. Prescription information is submitted electronically to the central part of the EPS, a sub-system within Spine. All information transmitted electronically between clinical systems is encrypted so it cannot be understood if intercepted.

What information will be transmitted to the EPS?

5. The information held within the EPS is the same as that which is written on paper prescriptions, i.e. patient details including the NHS number, prescriber and prescribed medication information.

Who can access the EPS?

6. Prescribers and practice staff can only access the information within their own clinical systems, as they do today. The prescription information held in the EPS is only made available to users when the prescription with a barcode is presented to a pharmacist to dispense, or when a patient has nominated a pharmacy to dispense their prescriptions.

How long is prescription data held within the NHS Care Record Service?

7. For EPS Release 1 the prescription messages are held within the EPS only while the prescription is valid.

Can patients opt out of EPS?

8. Patients can opt out of using the EPS on a prescription by prescription basis; in these circumstances a prescription without a barcode can be produced.