



NHS Management Executive
St. Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Colleague

NHS PRESCRIPTION FORMS - SECURITY MEASURES

Summary

1. This letter advises Health Boards and Trusts of the introduction of new NHS prescription forms.
2. New, redesigned prescription forms, printed for the first time on coloured paper with serial numbers, UV-sensitive markings, and microwriting, are being distributed to the NHS in Scotland to combat prescription fraud. Similar forms are already being used in England and Wales. The new forms are designed to be compatible with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology.
3. Full details are contained in the attached 4 Annexes.

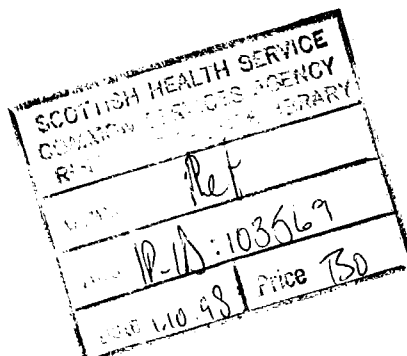
Action

4. Health Boards and NHS Trusts are asked to bring the 4 Annexes to this letter to the attention of all general practitioners and hospital based prescribers, general dental practitioners, community dental practitioners, nurse prescribers, community and hospital pharmacists and dispensing doctors.

4.1 All Health Boards are asked to ensure that every active NHS prescriber in their area receives a supply of the new prescription stationery by the end of January 1999.

(See Annex 2)

4.2 All NHS prescriptions written on or after 1 February 1999 must be written on the new prescription forms.



2nd October 1998

Addressees

For action:
General Managers,
Health Boards

General Manager,
Common Services Agency

General Manager,
State Hospitals Board
for Scotland

General Manager,
Health Education Board
for Scotland

Chief Executives,
NHS Trusts

For information:
Unit General Managers

Executive Director,
SCPMDE

Enquiries (General) to:

Mrs Maureen McFarlane
Room 57B
St Andrew's House
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

Tel: 0131-244 2597
Fax: 0131-244 2326

Enquiries (Fraud) to:

Mrs S Robertson
Room 76
St Andrew's House
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

Tel: 0131-244 2470
Fax: 0131-244 2326

4.3 Health Boards and Trusts are asked to retrieve and destroy any remaining stocks of non-secure prescription stationery in their possession or held by prescribers in their area after 31 January 1999.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Agnes Robson". The script is cursive and somewhat informal.

AGNES ROBSON
Director of Primary Care

NEW ANTI-FRAUD PRESCRIPTION FORMS IN SCOTLAND

1. New redesigned prescription forms, printed for the first time on coloured paper with serial numbers, UV-sensitive markings, and microwriting are being issued to the NHS in Scotland to combat prescription fraud. Similar forms are already being used in England and Wales.
2. Stolen and forged prescription forms can be used to obtain drugs, letting the NHS pick up the cost. The new forms will help tackle NHS losses in Scotland through theft and counterfeiting of prescription forms which are estimated at over £1m every year. Prescription fraud cheats the taxpayer, and deprives patients of the care they need. As well as the cost issue, prescription fraud feeds the illicit drug market.
3. The introduction of enhanced security features on NHS prescription forms constitutes part of the overall anti-fraud strategy which is common to all of the UK Health Departments. The higher cost of fraud resistant prescription stationery is expected to be balanced by the deterrent effect on theft and forgery. The Department of Health in London implemented the new security measures on 1 April 1998. In Scotland, a later date has been set to allow their introduction to be combined with the introduction of OCR technology at the Pharmacy Practice Division of the Common Services Agency (PPD). The introduction of OCR compatible forms allows for more efficient handling in PPD.
4. The first delivery of the new prescription forms will reach Health Boards in the East of Scotland during October/November 1998. Health Boards in the West of Scotland and NHS Trusts will receive their first delivery of the revised prescription stationery during January 1999.
5. Prescribers should note the inclusion of boxes to print patients' CHI and postcode. Completion of these boxes is **optional**. Computer software suppliers will be amending their software in due course to allow automatic printing of these items. It is not envisaged that this information will be provided on hand written prescriptions; this will not invalidate the prescription for dispensing purposes.
6. The right margin on the front of the form has been redesigned, in discussion with the Scottish Pharmaceutical General Council (SPGC), to reflect the dispensing endorsements most frequently used by community pharmacists.
7. "NP" and "NB ENSURE THAT DOSE IS STATED" have been deleted from the front of the form. A box for "No. of Days Treatment" is retained.
8. On the front of forms GP10, GP10(Comp) and GP10(SS) the text "For use only by pharmacist" has been removed from the box at the bottom left hand corner. There is now no box at the bottom left hand corner on forms GP14, GP10(N), HBP and HBP(A).

Security Features

9. The Efficiency Scrutiny Report published by DH in June last year contained 100 recommendations for more effective anti-fraud measures and improved prescription form security. The Report was accepted by the Government. To deter fraud, prescription forms will be printed on paper which is resistant to forgery and photocopying. Also, each form will carry a serial number to enable tracking through the process of printing and distribution, prescribing, dispensing and pricing. These measures are equivalent to measures adopted in England and Wales.

- **Coloured forms and UV-sensitive markings** will make counterfeiting difficult, especially by photocopying the form. The old style of prescription stationery had no protection, with no features to distinguish the original from a copy. Colour will also give the forms a greater appearance of value and importance.
- **Serial numbers** will also tackle counterfeiting as it will be possible to identify non-authentic serial numbers eg those duplicating genuine forms. Conviction in theft cases will be made easier as stolen forms will be recorded and immediately identifiable, and their passage through the system can be more easily traced to track the thief.
- **Microwriting** on the form will make counterfeiting extremely difficult. The writing can be seen only under a powerful magnifying glass or microscope.
- **Anti-tampering devices** will stop fraudsters from altering the prescription written on the form by an authorised prescriber. This relatively common fraud is committed by patients and criminals who attempt either to erase or amend the prescriber's writing to obtain a different drug or a different, often larger, quantity of a drug. The surface of the form will now react to common ink-erasing chemicals and to other physical tampering.
- **The reverse of the form** has been redesigned to facilitate point of dispensing checks, which will be introduced in due course.

TIMETABLE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW PRESCRIPTION STATIONERY

1. The new forms must be used for all prescriptions written on or after 1 February 1999. The revised forms will be issued during October/November 1998 to Eastern Area Health Boards, and during January 1999 to Western Area Health Boards and NHS Trusts.
2. The current, non-secure prescription forms will become obsolete as of 1 February 1999. NHS Prescribers are asked to return any stocks of non-secure forms remaining after 31 January 1999 to their Health Board or NHS Trust to be destroyed.
3. Health Boards and NHS Trusts are asked to ensure that appropriate stocks of the new stationery are available for use by all their prescribers with effect from 1 February 1999. (For orders of form GP14 please see timetable below).

3.1 **Western Area Health Boards** (Argyll and Clyde, Ayrshire and Arran, Dumfries and Galloway, Greater Glasgow, Highland, Lanarkshire and Western Isles) should place their 6 monthly bulk orders in the usual way. They must, however, ensure that an order is placed in respect of every active prescriber in their area, so that all prescribers receive a supply of new prescription stationery before the end of January 1999. The Directorate of Primary Care will issue a reminder of the need to supply all prescribers with new stationery when the GP master lists are sent out in early October.

3.2 **Eastern Area Health Boards** (Borders, Fife, Forth Valley, Grampian, Lothian, Orkney, Shetland and Tayside) will have taken delivery of their 6 monthly bulk order during October/November 1998. All Eastern Area Health Boards are asked to place supplementary orders for the new prescription stationery in respect of any active prescribers in their area who were not included in the bulk order delivered during October. Primary Care Departments will be approached by letter in early October for any supplementary orders they require.

3.3 **NHS Trusts** will be approached by letter in early October for orders to meet all their HBP prescription form requirements for a full 12 month period (1 February 1999 to 31 January 2000).

Timetable for Ordering and Delivery

- Early October 1998:
- Letters and master lists will be issued to Western Area Health Boards requesting orders for GP10 pads, comps, single sheet stationery and GP10(N).
 - Letters will be issued to Eastern Area Health Boards requesting supplementary orders in respect of any GP10 prescribers who were not included in their October delivery bulk order.

- Letters will be issued to NHS Trusts requesting orders for HBP forms for use over the 12 month period beginning 1 February 1999.
- By end of October 1998:
- All orders will be passed by Directorate of Primary Care to The Stationery Office for printing.
- During January 1999:
- All orders will be delivered to Health Boards and NHS Trusts.
 - Stocks of the revised form GP14 will be available during January 1999. Health Boards and NHS Trusts should place orders in the usual way and issue forms to prescribers before 1 February 1999.
- 1 February 1999:
- All prescriptions must be written on new forms.
 - Non-secure stationery obsolete.
 - All remaining stocks of obsolete prescription stationery to be returned to Health Boards and NHS Trusts and destroyed.

COSTS AND STOCK CONTROL

Costs

1. The higher cost of fraud resistant prescription stationery is expected to be balanced over time by its deterrent effect on theft and forgery. In addition we expect that serial numbering will encourage improved stock control, resulting in fewer prescription forms being stockpiled in the system.

Stock Control

2. Prescription forms are valuable items. Stolen, counterfeited or forged forms may be used to obtain drugs at a considerable cost to the NHS. A number of security features is being introduced into prescription forms from October 1998.

3. Comparison of the number of forms produced with the number forwarded to the Pharmacy Practice Division of the CSA for pricing suggests that there is significant waste in the system at present.

4. Serial numbering on the prescription forms will give Health Boards and NHS Trusts an opportunity to record the numbers of forms received from The Stationery Office (TSO) and the numbers issued to NHS Trusts and practices. This will facilitate stock control and enable Health Boards and Trusts to monitor supplies to individual prescribers more closely.

5. Form GP10(SS) for use with laser printers will be made available to prescribers as required.

6. GPs and other prescribers are asked to note that the introduction of security features makes the whole range of prescription stationery more expensive than before. The revised forms are valuable items in their own right and should be stored in secure conditions. All prescribers are asked to restrict their order for prescription stationery to the amount they realistically expect to use.

Improving Prescription Form Security

7. The following actions should be undertaken by Health Boards and NHS Trusts to reduce the opportunity for fraud. They should be introduced as soon as possible, where they are not already in place:

- ensure that a record is kept of the prescription forms received from TSO, and those issued to prescribers. Any discrepancies in stock received should be reported immediately to TSO on telephone number 0161 683 2376 and confirmed in writing or by fax on 0161 683 2396;

- ensure that forms are stored securely while on Health Board or Trust premises. Ensure also that access to prescription forms is kept to a minimum and that all those with access are aware of the need for security;
- keep stocks of prescription forms to a minimum level which enables supplies to be provided to contractors promptly. Excessive stockholding is not only wasteful when changes to the forms occur, but makes it difficult to identify and quantify losses;
- restrict the number of forms issued to a prescriber at any one time consistent with ensuring adequacy of supply;
- agree with each practice or prescriber, named persons who will be responsible for ordering and signing for prescription or form deliveries - deliveries to practices should be securely traceable.

Reporting Losses

8. Health Boards and NHS Trusts should take urgent action in the event of any losses of prescription forms.

9. Health Boards and NHS Trusts should follow current procedures for alerting appropriate pharmacies about the loss of forms, but should also let them know the serial numbers of the stolen forms.

PRESCRIPTION STATIONERY - DETAILS OF CHANGESPrescription Form Types and Colours

Form Type	Old	New
GP10(pads)	White	Orange
GP10(comp)	White	Orange
GP10(single sheet)	White	Orange
HBP	Blue	Blue
HBP(comp)	Blue	Blue
HBP(A)	Pink	Pink
HBP(A)(comp)	Pink	Pink
GP14	Yellow	Yellow
GP10(N)*	Green	Mauve

*Form types GP10(PN) and GP10(CN) have been discontinued. All nurses will use form GP10(N) with effect from 1 February 1999.

Front of Prescription Form - Details of Redesigns and Text Changes

Form Type	Old Form	New Form
All	Form type located top right hand corner	Form type located top left hand corner
All	No designated area for postcode	Last line of address contains boxes
All	NP stated in line under address area	NP has been removed
All	"No of days treatment NB ensure that does is stated"	"No of days treatment" has moved to the left hand side of the form "NB ensure that dose is stated" has been removed
All	No designated area for input of CHI number	Area below address contains boxes for input of CHI number
All	"Pharmacist's stamp"	"Pharmacy stamp"
All	Right hand column headed - "PPD use only"	"Dispensing Endorsements"
All	Column blank	Column contains boxes for input of numbers relating to the pack size used to dispense the item
All	Box for date	Box for date has been extended
All	"For use only by Pharmacist"	The text has been removed
All	Text at foot of prescription "Important: Read notes carefully BEFORE going to the pharmacy. Medicine urgently required may be obtained outside normal hours is prescription is marked "URGENT" by the doctor"	New text, the typeface has been changed for better definition. "Please read notes overleaf and complete relevant parts BEFORE going to the pharmacy". Text relating to urgent fees has been moved to the back of the form.
HBP HBP(A)	"District"	The District will be pre-printed
HBP HBP(A)	N/A	Boxes added to guide accurate input of code no.

Back of Prescription Form - Details of Redesign and Text Changes

Form Type	Old Form	New Form
All	N/A	Above patient signature and date in part D " <i>I declare that the information is true and complete</i> "
All	"WARNING TO GIVE FALSE INFORMATION MAY LEAD TO PROSECUTION"	"WARNING FALSE INFORMATION MAY LEAD TO PROSECUTION"
All	Footnote "This form is the property of the National Health Service"	This information has been removed
HBP(A)	On reverse: Boxes for serial dispensing and very small text	Re-designed to be consistent with all other form types

Back of Prescription Form - Details of Redesign and Text Changes (continued)

Form Type	Old Form	New Form
All	N/A	Form type has been added at the top left hand corner
All	First bullet point relating to completion of form	This information has been deleted. Replacement is on the front of the form. "Please read notes overleaf and complete relevant parts BEFORE going to the pharmacy"
All	Text relating to medicines required urgently was located on the front of the prescription	This text is now the first bullet point under important notes for patients
All	Part A The patient named overleaf The patient's parent/guardian/ representative Aligned vertically	Part A The patient Patient's representative Aligned horizontally
All	Part B - signature and date required	Signature and date removed. All patients are required to sign Part D
All	Single box for monetary value	Monetary value boxes with decimal point places
All	N/A	"OR" positioned between parts B & C
All	Part C Exemption category tick boxes aligned vertically	Exemption category tick boxes aligned horizontally where possible
All	Part C "I do not have to pay the charge because the patient (x in appropriate box)	"The patient does not have to pay because he/she (x in appropriate box) Checks may be made with the DSS"
All	Part C N/A	New text at bottom of Part C "YOU MAY BE ASKED TO PRODUCE EVIDENCE OF EXEMPTION"
All	Part C Exemption category F has box for Ref No	Box for Ref No has been removed
All	Part C Categories under: RECEIVES OR IS THE PARTNER OF SOMEONE RECEIVING Box for date of birth	"Give details of person getting benefits" Box requiring Name and Date of Birth
All	Part C N/A	Part C "NHS USE ONLY Evidence not produced <input type="checkbox"/>
All	N/A	"You may be asked to produce evidence of exemption"
All	Exemption category L (contraceptives) separated from other exemption categories by "OR"	Exemption category L now separated by dotted line
All	N/A	Part D "Must be completed by/on behalf of the patient"
GP14	N/A	Part C - For reasons of economy, all prescription forms show exemption categories A-L. Category L does not apply to dental practitioners and should be ignored.

FORM GP10

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (SCOTLAND)

Name
Address
Age if under 12 yrs. -
Yrs / Mths
Postcode

Pharmacy Stamp

No. of Days Treatment CHI No.

Pack size Numbers only

Pack size Numbers only

Pack size Numbers only

Signature of Doctor

Date

Please read notes overleaf and complete relevant parts BEFORE going to a pharmacy.

GP10

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR PATIENTS

- Prescriptions marked "URGENT" by the doctor may be obtained outside normal hours.
- If you think you might be entitled to a refund of the money you have paid, you must get an NHS receipt (EC 57) when you pay. You cannot get one later.
- If you need a lot of medication you may want to buy a prepayment certificate.
- To find out more about prescription charges, get leaflet HC11 "Are you entitled to help with health costs?" from your pharmacist.

PART A I am the patient patient's representative IX in the appropriate box

PART B I have paid the sum of £ for the item(s) overleaf

OR

PART C The patient does not have to pay because he/she IX in the appropriate box
Checks may be made with the DSS

IS EXEMPT ON AGE GROUNDS:

- A1** under 16 years of age **B** 16, 17 or 18 and in full-time education
- C** 60 years of age or over

HOLDS AN EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE:

- D** maternity or medical exemption (EC 92)
- E** prepayment certificate (EC 96)
- F** War/Mod pensioner exemption certificate - and the items overleaf are for the pensionable disability

RECEIVES OR IS THE PARTNER OF SOMEONE RECEIVING:

- G** Income Support **H** Family Credit
- I** Disability Working Allowance **J** Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- K** a current HC2 NHS charges certificate for full help

Give details of person getting benefits

Name Date of birth

L The item prescribed is a free-of-charge contraceptive
YOU MAY BE ASKED TO PRODUCE EVIDENCE OF EXEMPTION

NHS USE ONLY Evidence not produced

PART D Must be completed by/on behalf of patient I declare that the information is true and complete

Signed Date

Name in capitals

Address if different from overleaf

Postcode

WARNING FALSE INFORMATION MAY LEAD TO PROSECUTION