

Guidelines for Issuing Prescriptions for Incontinence and Stoma Appliances

1 Key points

1.1 The aim of this guideline is to provide guidance to GP practices, dispensing appliance and pharmacy contractors on the issue of prescriptions for incontinence and stoma appliances.

1.2 Patients requiring incontinence or stoma appliances can have these dispensed either by a dispensing appliance contractor (DAC), a pharmacy contractor or a dispensing doctor.

1.3 It is imperative that patients are aware that they have a choice as to where their prescription can be dispensed.

1.4 Prescriptions should only be issued at the request of the patient/patient's carer.

1.5 Requests for prescriptions should only be accepted from a continence specialist nurse/stoma specialist nurse, hospital ward staff or district nurse if a prior agreement has been made with the GP.

1.6 No appliances should be supplied to a patient without a signed prescription.

1.7 Retrospective prescriptions will **not** be issued by the prescriber.

1.8 No emergency supplies should be made without prior agreement with the prescriber.

2 Scope

2.1 This Guidance applies to the following Groups:

- GP Practices
- Dispensing Appliance Contractors (DACs)
- Pharmacy Contractors
- District Nurses
- Practice Nurses
- Stoma Nurse Specialists
- Continence Nurse Specialists
- Patients, Patient's Carers/Relatives

3 Background

3.1 The Department of Health reviewed the arrangements for issuing prescriptions for and dispensing of incontinence and Stoma Appliances and issued the National Health Service (Pharmaceutical Services) (Appliances) (Amendment) Regulations 2009, amended in April 2010.¹

3.2 The changes follow a long series of public consultations by the Department of Health, the aims of the amendments are:

- to improve the service provided to patients; *and*
- to harmonise arrangements, so far as possible between pharmacies and Dispensing Appliance Contractors (DACs)

3.3 The Department of Health's document '*An overview of the new arrangements under Part IX of the Drug Tariff for the provision of stoma and urology appliances – and related services – in primary care*' (April 2010) provides an overview of the new arrangements mentioned in the Regulations.²

4 Overview of Service Provision

4.1 In the dispensing of stoma and urology appliances both dispensing appliance contractors (DACs) and pharmacy contractors are required to provide a number of related essential services.

4.2 From the 1st April 2010, for items that dispensing appliance contractors and pharmacy contractors in England supply in the normal course of business, they will be required to provide the following as part of essential services:

- **A repeat dispensing service:** DACs will have to provide this service; pharmacy contractors already provide it.
- **A dispensing referral:** if the DAC or pharmacy contractor cannot dispense the item prescribed or cannot provide the required stoma appliance customisation, he or she must - with the patient's consent - refer the prescription form or repeatable prescription to another DAC or pharmacy contractor. If the patient does not consent to this, then the DAC or pharmacy contractor must provide contact details for at least two other contractors - if he or she has the details - which may be able to dispense the required item or service. DACs and pharmacy contractors shall not accept or receive any gift or reward for making such referrals.
- **Urgent supply without a prescription:** in the case of urgency, the DAC or pharmacy contractor may supply an appliance if so asked to do so **by a prescriber** so long as the prescriber undertakes to give the DAC or pharmacist a non-electronic prescription form or non-electronic repeatable prescription in respect of the appliance requested within 72 hours. Alternatively, the prescriber must transmit to the ETP service an electronic prescription within 72 hours.

- **A home delivery service and supply of wipes and disposal bags:** as an additional dispensing service, both DACs and pharmacy contractors shall make available home delivery for all items in Part IXA (qualifying items), Part IXB and Part IXC of the Drug Tariff. DACs and pharmacy contractors must also provide, where necessary, a reasonable supply of wipes and disposal bags for Part IX A (qualifying items), Part IX B and Part IX C items.

Note that a marker has been placed in the Drug Tariff next to those categories to indicate with which items wipes and disposal bags must be supplied.

- **Provide appropriate advice:** the DAC or pharmacy contractor shall ensure that appropriate advice is given to patients about any appliance provided to them in order to enable them to utilise, store and dispose of the appliance appropriately.
- DACs and pharmacy contractors must also provide appropriate advice to patients to whom they provide appliances via a repeatable prescription on the importance of only requesting those items, which they actually need. DACs and pharmacy contractors must also ensure that a patient may consult, if the patient so wishes, someone to obtain expert advice regarding the appliance being dispensed. These requirements apply equally to advice that is given at a DAC's or pharmacy contractor's premises – or through a telephone care line.

5 Responsibilities of the GP Practice

5.1 Practices should be vigilant about the number of requests for repeat prescriptions from appliance contractors, as well as the quantities requested. If feasible, it may be useful to allocate one receptionist and one GP to deal with all requests from appliance contractors.

5.2 Prescriptions should normally be issued at the request of the patient (or patient's carer).

5.3 Requests for prescriptions should only be accepted from a continence specialist nurse/stoma specialist nurse, hospital ward staff or district nurse if a prior agreement has been made with the GP.

5.4 If GPs have any queries regarding continence products they can contact the Continence Advisory Service on 01353 652268 for Cambridgeshire patients and 01733 466664/466646 for Peterborough patients.

5.5 It should be noted that there is an obligation when issuing prescriptions for **ALL** appliances, that the patient should be appropriately advised by the pharmacy or DAC on the importance of only requesting items they actually need.

5.6 On receipt of a request for appliances (from the patient or appliance contractor), a check should be made to ensure the quantities requested seem appropriate to prevent stockpiling and waste. Guidance on quantities to be issued for urology appliances can be found in the [local Continence Formulary](#).

5.7 The majority of patients will be advised by the stoma specialist nurse to request their prescriptions monthly but this will be dependent on their personal circumstances. If requests for stoma appliances are more frequent than this then the prescriber should

discuss this with the patient and if required further advice sought from the stoma specialist nurse.

5.8 Retrospective prescriptions should **not** be issued by the prescriber in response to a request from an appliance contractor; to cover items already supplied (“post supply”). In these cases, GPs are entitled to refuse to supply a prescription.

5.9 There may be some occasions where patients have difficulty in managing their repeat prescriptions. In these cases the stoma specialist nurse, continence specialist, or District Nurse will inform the surgery of any arrangements they have made on behalf of the patient with a community pharmacy or dispensing appliance contractor. This arrangement should be recorded in the patient’s notes and should **not** involve the issuing of retrospective prescriptions.

5.10 Prescriptions for incontinence and stoma appliances should be issued on a separate form from the rest of the patient’s medication to avoid dispensing problems if a patient chooses to use a dispensing appliance contractor and not a pharmacy contractor.

5.11 Ideally the DAC or pharmacy contractor used by the patient should be recorded in the patient’s medical records by the prescriber.

6 Responsibilities of the Dispensing Appliance or Pharmacy Contractor

6.1 Dispensing appliance or pharmacy contractors must **not** supply incontinence or stoma appliances before receiving a valid prescription, except in the dispensing of urgent supplies. In this exceptional circumstance, urgent supplies of incontinence or stoma appliances may be dispensed by the contractor before receiving the prescription **only at the request of the prescriber** in line with Regulations. In this circumstance the prescriber must undertake to give the dispensing appliance or pharmacy contractor a prescription within 72 hours.

6.2 Alternatively, the dispensing appliance or pharmacy contractor must contact the prescriber and request their permission to supply the incontinence or stoma appliance in advance of the receipt of the prescription.

6.3 Dispensing appliance or pharmacy contractors must **not** contact prescribers to provide retrospective prescriptions to cover a non urgent situation.

6.4 No appliances should be supplied to a patient without a signed prescription.

6.5 Some pharmacy contractors and appliance contractors operate a repeat medication service for their patients. At the time of each repeat request the pharmacist/appliance contractor must also provide appropriate advice to patients on the importance of only requesting those items which they actually need to ensure that unnecessary supplies are not made.

6.6 When dispensing an appliance, the patient should be provided with a written note of the pharmacy/DAC contractor name, address and telephone number. Dispensing labels or other methods can be used.

6.7 The pharmacy/DAC must provide a reasonable supply of disposable wipes and bags for specified items in the Drug Tariff.

6.8 The pharmacy/DAC must offer to deliver *specified appliances* to the patient's home; delivery must be made with reasonable promptness and at a time agreed with the patient.

6.9 The packaging used for the appliance must not have any markings which could indicate the contents; the method of delivery must not convey the type of appliance being delivered.

7 Responsibilities of the Patient/patient's carer (this includes care home staff)

7.1 The patient (or patient's carer) should check and only order products which are actually required to reduce potential stockpiling and waste.

7.2 The patient (or patient's carer) is responsible for ensuring that the prescription for the incontinence or stoma appliance is sent / taken to the contractor of their choice for dispensing.

7.3 The patient (or patient's carer) should inform prescriber if needs/circumstances change which might have an impact on supplies needed.

8 Responsibilities of the Continence Specialist Nurse / Stoma Specialist Nurse / District Nurse

8.1 Patients must be informed of the various options as to where their prescriptions for incontinence and stoma appliances can be dispensed.

8.2 Patients should be given information that takes into account any religious , ethnic , cultural needs, factors such as physical or learning disabilities sight or hearing problems or difficulties with reading or speaking English

8.3 Prescribing incontinence appliances - quantities and appliance choice prescribed for patients should be in line with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group [Continence Formulary](#) and according to the needs of the patient.

8.4 Prescribing stoma appliances – quantities and appliance choice will be made based on the individual needs of the patient.

8.5 Provide the GP practice with the following information when a new patient is prescribed an incontinence or stoma appliance so that the GP practice can record in the patients notes:

- Name of specialist who has initiated treatment;
- Name and contact details for specialist nurse for the patient in case there are any queries regarding the appliance used by the patient;

- Plan of follow up care / reviews

8.6 If changes are made to the patient's prescription then the prescriber and GP practice and dispensing appliance or pharmacy contractor must be informed at the earliest opportunity and all details must be documented in the notes.

8.7 Home visits/attendance at clinics should also be used as an opportunity to ensure patients are ordering appropriate quantities.

9 Ongoing Issues

9.1 If ongoing problems in the provision of incontinence and stoma appliances are experienced that are not addressed by this policy please contact the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG Medicines Management Team to enable further investigation of the issues to take place.

References

1. (Pharmaceutical Services) (Appliances) (Amendment) Regulations 2009, amended in April 2010.
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2009/3340/contents/made?view=plain

2. *'An overview of the new arrangements under Part IX of the Drug Tariff for the provision of stoma and urology appliances – and related services – in primary care'* (Department of Health, April 2010)
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_110492

Adapted for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG from document produced by Dorset CCG.

Version:	1
Date:	October 2014
Review date:	October 2015 or earlier if required by local or national changes.