

EPS Release 2: Smartcard Issuance

As you are aware EPS Release 2 is being deployed nationally and requires pharmacy staff to be issued with Smartcards to access the NHS Personal Demographics Service (PDS). To operate EPS Release 2, staff within pharmacies and dispensing appliance contractors (DACs) in every PCT will require individual Smartcards. Different staff will require different roles within EPS:

- Community pharmacist
- Locum pharmacist
- Pre-registration pharmacist
- Dispensing technician
- Medical counter assistant

These Smartcards are required for a number of activities including:

- Installing the system
- Training
- Accessing patients personal demographic information
- Recording, deleting or amending patient nomination requests
- Receiving, dispensing, labelling and issuing of EPS Release 2 prescription items
- Endorsing EPS Release 2 prescription and submitting electronic reimbursement messages

The local Registration Authority (RA) plays a vital role in the enablement of EPS. It is important that Registration Authority's are aware of their obligations to support national enablement.

- *The role of the local Registration Authority is to ensure that individuals providing healthcare services to the NHS directly or indirectly have timely access to NHS Care Records Service applications in accordance with their healthcare role. It is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that all the requirements of Registration Authorities are met and maintained.*
- *The RA, within the local governance structure, will ensure that all aspects of Registration Authority services and operations are performed in accordance with RA Policy and Procedure requirements identified in Registration Policy and Practices for Level 3 Authentication and Registration Authority Operational Process and Guidance documents. It is important that all members of the RA Team, Manager, Sponsors and Agents are aware of the confidential nature of some of the information captured during registration and preserve its confidentiality.*

[Gateway Reference 6244]

Nomination is a key feature of EPS Release 2. As it is led by patient choice dispensers may start to receive nominated prescriptions from outside their own PCT. Pharmacies and DACs can use Release 2 even if their PCT does not have Secretary of State Directions.

- Pharmacists have been advised that they must apply for their Release 2 Smartcards in the usual manner, by contacting their local PCT.
- PCT RA should process Release 2 Smartcard applications from Pharmacies and DACs swiftly to ensure the PCT does not cause a delay in the roll out of EPS Release 2.
- PCT RA teams should process user role profile amendments from General Practice organisations swiftly to ensure the PCT does not cause a delay in the roll out of EPS Release 2 to prescribing sites.

At a recent national Pharmacy event, many pharmacy staff raised concerns at the lack of cooperation and support from PCTs to issue Smartcards. Whilst it is recognised that PCT RA are affected by the wider NHS reorganisation and this does introduce additional challenges, PCT RA should not be refusing issuance of Smartcards to Pharmacy staff on the basis of Secretary of State Direction or on the basis of the organisation for which they work.

- PCT RA leads should ensure that the local process is clearly signposted for contractors to follow bearing in mind that they do not have access to the NHS/PCT nww intranet site.
- PCT RA leads should note the [guidance for migration from Release 1 to Release 2 Smartcards](#).

Please ensure that this information is shared with relevant colleagues within your organisation.

If you have any questions or concerns please direct these to your SHA RA Lead in the first instance or you can contact the Access Control team via email at cfh.accesscontrol@nhs.net.