

Electronic Prescription Service

Smartcard access for Dispensing Contractors

Over 20,000 pharmacists have Smartcards to operate Release 1 of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS).

As implementation of EPS Release 2 begins, find out what you need to know about Smartcards and protecting the confidentiality of patient information.



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Introduction

In Release 1 of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS), community pharmacists were issued with an EPS01 card to operate the service. To obtain this card they had to be registered to government standard e-GIF Level 3 with the Registration Authority of a primary care trust (PCT). As EPS Release 1 does not allow any access to the NHS Care Records Service (NHS CRS), it is not subject to the same user policies as the NHS CRS applications.

In Release 2 of the Electronic Prescription Service, dispensing contractors will have access to a part of the NHS CRS known as the Personal Demographics Service. Therefore, dispensing contractors and their staff will be required to adopt the same 'single card' access model as all other staff accessing parts of the NHS CRS.

Dispensing contractors have a duty of care to keep information they access on the NHS CRS safe, secure and confidential. They are bound by the terms and conditions as set out in the RA01 form and should be aware of Confidentiality: NHS Code of Practice and the Care Record Guarantee, which is the commitment made to patients by the NHS about how information held on the NHS CRS will be governed.

A record will be kept of everyone who looks at information the NHS CRS holds about a patient. Patients can ask to have a list of everyone who has looked at their records and when they did so.

Strict and robust safeguards are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of every patient's health record, including the demographics information stored in the Personal Demographics Service (PDS). If a user attempts to access a record which has previously been marked sensitive, an alert will be generated by the service. Notification of the alert will be sent to the appropriate authority within the PCT for investigation.

For a copy of the Care Record Guarantee visit www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/crs_guarantee.pdf or ask your local PCT.

There will be new arrangements for pharmacy staff that need to operate Release 2 of the Electronic Prescription Service. They will need to have an NHS CRS Smartcard. This document provides an overview of the Smartcard arrangements for Release 2 and the arrangements to ensure a smooth transition from the current EPS Release 1 arrangements to EPS Release 2.

Detailed guidance, "Migration of users from EPS Release 1 functionality to EPS Release 2 functionality" has been provided to PCT Registration Authority managers and agents.

During the initial implementation of EPS Release 2 further work will be undertaken to determine the impact of these arrangements on business processes and workload.

These arrangements do not change the existing legal and professional responsibility for dispensing.

What are Smartcards?

Smartcards control who can access the NHS CRS and what level of access they can have.

Smartcards are similar to a chip and PIN credit or debit card, but are more secure as they don't use a magnetic strip and have an alphanumeric Passcode rather than a PIN. A user's Smartcard is printed with their name, photograph and user's unique identifier number. The Smartcard also contains unique security features that allow access to the NHS CRS and the Electronic Prescription Service.

A Smartcard is used in conjunction with a Passcode. Neither Smartcard nor Passcode can be shared. The Passcode is four to eight characters in length (a combination of numbers and letters), and is set by, and known only to, the user.

Using your NHS CRS Smartcard correctly will help protect the security and confidentiality of patient information.

Remember:

- Keep your Smartcard safe and secure
- Never tell anyone your Passcode
- Never allow anyone else to use it
- Never leave your Smartcard unattended
- Immediately report its loss, theft or damage to your PCT Registration Authority contact.

Smartcard registration

NHS CRS Smartcard registration will be undertaken by the local Registration Authority (RA). PCTs have responsibility for establishing their own Registration Authority service –this may be within a primary care trust, as part of a shared local health community service or a wider shared service.

The Registration Authority will ensure that, where needed, all the appropriate identity checks are performed, and that the terms and conditions of NHS CRS Smartcard use (known as the RA01 form) are understood and acknowledged with the applicant's signature.

These RA01 terms and conditions include:

- Keeping the Smartcard private and secure
- Not permitting anybody else to use the Smartcard or any access session established with the NHS CRS applications
- Not sharing their Passcode with any other user or making copies of their Passcode
- Ensuring that they leave their workstation secure when not in use and remove the Smartcard from the card reader
- Reporting any loss, theft or use of their Smartcard by a third party to their local Registration Authority

Pharmacists who have an EPS Release 1 card (known as the EPS01 card), will only have to sign the terms and conditions for the NHS CRS Smartcard. Identity checks would have been conducted when they were first registered for the EPS01 card.

All Pharmacy staff registering for an NHS CRS Smartcard for the first time will have to go through the full registration process which includes identity checks

that satisfy government standard 'e-GIF Level 3'. This means providing at least three forms of ID (photo and non-photo), including proof of address and attending a face-to-face meeting with the PCT Registration Authority. Contact your local PCT Registration Authority or LPC to find out what arrangements are in place locally for this meeting, for example Registration Authority visits to pharmacies or pharmacy specific sessions at the PCT.

Frequently asked questions

What is a sponsor?

An individual who has been appointed to approve access to information and functionality of the NHS CRS and other National Programme for IT applications, such as EPS. The sponsor will grant approval of appropriate Role Based Access Control (RBAC) codes so that staff have appropriate access to the NHS CRS and EPS based on their job role and, if necessary, area of work.

Sponsors are identified by the PCT Registration Authority. Registration Authority Managers have been advised to consult with local pharmacy representatives to propose individuals who could act as sponsors, for example PCT pharmacy advisors, pharmacy managers etc. A key consideration is the accessibility of sponsors to ensure there are not delays in the Smartcard registration process.

What is Role Based Access Control (RBAC)?

This defines a national standard set of:

- job roles
- related activities; and
- areas of work

These are approved by a sponsor and granted by the Registration Authority to a user of NHS CRS applications.

Each application, such as EPS, uses these definitions to enable access to specific functionality and information.

What do I do if I forget, lose or have my Smartcard stolen?

If your Smartcard is lost or stolen you must report it immediately to your Registration Authority who will cancel your Smartcard and organise for a replacement card.

At the time of registration, your Registration Authority will advise you of the arrangements in place within the PCT should you forget, lose or have your Smartcard stolen.

What do I do in the following scenarios?

- I accidentally lock my Smartcard
- I need to reset my Passcode
- I need to renew my Smartcard certificates

Registration Authority guidance is available on the use of the Smartcard Service Centre and Self Service Portal. Copies of this guidance are included as an insert in this newsletter.

If you are unable to access the Smartcard Service Centre and Self Service Portal you should check with your system supplier. This function is available through the majority of pharmacy systems.

What action is required if the Smartcard is no longer required, eg member of staff leaves?

The pharmacist or pharmacy manager should advise the local Registration Authority prior to a user leaving an organisation. The Registration Authority will then need to follow the appropriate access removal process.

Leavers with no intention of returning to an organisation in the near future, where a Smartcard is required to access NHS CRS compliant applications, for example users having a change of career or those retiring, should have their Smartcard and its certificates revoked using an RA03 form.

Smartcards for Release 2

The Smartcard model for dispensing contractors and their staff operating EPS Release 2 systems is:

1. One NHS CRS Smartcard per authorised user of the service.
2. To use an EPS Release 2 compliant system, all cardholders will sign the RA01 terms and conditions (this means no Smartcard sharing and no sharing of access sessions with the NHS CRS).
3. EPS Release 2 pharmacy staff will need an appropriate user role profile (URP) registered with the NHS CRS User Directory before they can use any EPS Release 2 compliant dispensing system.
4. The NHS Registration Authority policies and procedures will ensure that pharmacy staff are issued with Smartcards and registered with the user role profile to meet the e-GIF Level 3 government standard.
5. All users who need access to the system such as pharmacists, pre-registration pharmacists, counter assistants, and dispensing technicians will need to be registered with an appropriate access profile as defined by the local Registration Authority.
6. Pharmacy staff will be allocated access rights dependent on their roles within the pharmacy as deemed appropriate by the sponsor.
7. All pharmacy staff will be registered with an organisation identifier that represents the NACS code of the pharmacy site where they operate the service on a regular basis.
8. The NHS Registration Authority within a primary care trust (PCT) can only add, modify, or delete a user role profile for an organisation associated with that PCT.

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9. The only permitted exception to this model is the case of community pharmacists/dispensing technician locums who may need to legitimately work within many community pharmacies at short notice. In such cases, they will also have a user role profile registered against a generic organisation NACS code for a “locum pharmacy”. In such cases, a warning will be displayed to the user when they log on to a local pharmacy system.
 10. All locum pharmacist/dispensing technicians will be registered with a locum user role profile. All pharmacist/dispensing technicians with a locum user role profile will be able to work with any EPS Release 2 compliant system connected to the service.
 11. The NHS Registration Authority within any PCT will be able to create a user role for a “locum” pharmacist/dispensing technician.
 12. If a user does not have a user profile for the site they are in or the locum pharmacy profile they will not be able to use the service.
 13. In Release 2 of the Electronic Prescription Service, dispensing contractors will have access to a part of the NHS Care Records Service known as the Personal Demographics Service. If a user attempts to access a record in the PDS that has previously been flagged as sensitive, an alert will be generated by the service. These will be sent to the appropriate authority within the PCT for investigation.

Migration of users from EPS Release 1 to EPS Release 2

EPS01 cards that are used for EPS Release 1 will not operate in an EPS Release 2 system. This means that all sites currently using EPS Release 1 will need to ensure staff migrate to the NHS CRS Smartcard and sign the RA01 terms and conditions. This migration will take place as part of the EPS Release 2 implementation activities.

A number of factors will need to be considered when deciding the specific action required. These include:

- Planned go live dates
- Circumstances of the individual pharmacist; In particular, do they work at one site or a range of sites
- Ensuring business continuity of EPS Release 1 functionality throughout the nationwide transition to EPS Release 2.

Potential scenarios

Scenario 1

A pharmacist works at one or more sites where they will only use an EPS Release 2 dispensing system.

Pharmacist action required

The pharmacist will complete and sign an RA01 terms and conditions form for their EPS01 card to become their NHS CRS smartcard with a profile for their site(s).

Scenario 2

A pharmacist is working in a site with an EPS Release 1 system, who also performs locum duties at an site(s) where EPS Release 2 dispensing system is in use.

Pharmacist action required

The pharmacist will complete and sign an RA01 terms and conditions form. Their existing EPS01 card will become their NHS CRS Smartcard with a locum user role profile added to enable access to EPS Release 2.

Continued on next page.

Site action required to ensure access to EPS Release 1 during the transition to EPS Release 2

If by upgrading pharmacist EPS01 cards to NHS CRS Smartcards, a pharmacy is left without an individual with an EPS01 card to operate the Release 1 system, the Registration Authority can consider the following options:

Option 1

Issue the pharmacy with an EPS01 'premises card' to ensure continuity of EPS Release 1 functionality until the pharmacy upgrades to an EPS Release 2 dispensing system.

This card will be retained in the pharmacy. There is no requirement for a face to face meeting for a 'premises card' to be issued. They can be posted or delivered to the pharmacy with a letter of receipt (EPS01 form). The Passcode will be sent separately. If a receipt is not confirmed within a specified period, the card will be cancelled.

Option 2

Issue an EPS01 card to one or more staff within the pharmacy with an EPS Release 1 dispensing system. If this is decided locally between the pharmacy and the PCT, as an alternative to the 'premises card', the EPS01 cards can be upgraded remotely to NHS CRS Smartcards when the site enables EPS Release 2.

A number of factors will need to be considered before determining the most appropriate option. These include:

- Speed of obtaining the card particularly if a face to face interview is required. This would be required for option 2
- Staff that will require a card for Release 2. With option 2 the staff will complete and sign an RA01 terms and conditions form for their EPS01 card to become their NHS CRS smartcard when the site implements Release 2.

The National Registration Authority has advised PCTs that they should start issuing 'premises cards' as soon as possible to ensure business continuity of access to EPS Release 1 systems throughout the nationwide transition to EPS Release 2.

Guidance on local arrangements and the timing of issuing cards will be communicated locally by PCT Registration Authorities.

Detailed FAQs on smartcards will be made available on the PSNC website (www.psnc.org.uk/smartcards) or alternatively contact your PCT Registration Authority for support.



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