

Electronic Prescription Service

September 2016



Healthwatch North Somerset
3rd Floor, The Sion
Crown Glass Place
Nailsea BS48 1RB

01275 851400

contact@healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk

www.healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk



Contents

Introduction	3
About Healthwatch North Somerset	3
Our Mission	4
Summary	4
Background.....	5
What is EPS?	5
Why use the EPS service?	5
Methods.....	6
Summary of our Findings	7
Mythbusting.....	9
You need a computer to use the EPS system	9
Feedback Received	10
Negative Feedback received.....	10
Positive Feedback Received.....	11
Recommendations	13
Distribution of the Report	14
Appendix 1: Acknowledgements.....	15
Appendix 2: Responses from Commissioners & Service Providers.....	16
Appendix 3: EPS Leaflet.....	17
Appendix 4: Useful Websites	18
Appendix 5: HWNS Electronic Prescription Survey.....	19

Electronic Prescription Service

Introduction

At Healthwatch North Somerset (HWNS), we listen to patient experiences, base our work on them and inform commissioners and providers about good practice and areas for service improvement.

Our Prioritisation Panel, which is made up of HWNS staff, directors and volunteers, recognised that prescription services, and in particular the Electronic Prescription Service adopted by GPs, was mentioned several times in the period between April 2016 and June 2016. On the basis of this it was recommended by the Panel that HWNS endeavour to collect further feedback on this specific topic to gauge public understanding of the system.

This report summarises the feedback we have received from local people and makes recommendations for improvement.

About Healthwatch North Somerset

Healthwatch North Somerset's statutory duty and remit, which is laid out in The Health and Social Care Act 2012, is to provide a voice for people who use health and adult social care services, by:

Influencing

- Giving people an opportunity to have a say about their local health and social care services, including those whose voice isn't usually heard.
- Taking public views to the people who make decisions - including having a representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Feeding issues back to government via Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Signposting

- Providing information about health and social care services in the local area. Advising people on where to go for specialist help or information (signposting).
- Helping people make choices and decisions about their care.
- Working closely with other groups and organisations in the local area.

Under the Health and Social Care Act (2012) Healthwatch North Somerset has the following powers and functions.

Electronic Prescription Service Myth Buster Sept 2016

Healthwatch North Somerset is a charity (No: 1158487) and a company limited by guarantee (England and Wales No: 08187141). Registered office 3rd Floor, The Sion, Crown Glass Place, Nailsea BS48 1RB

- 🌱 A duty on service providers and commissioners to respond to requests of information within 20 working days.
- 🌱 A duty on service providers and commissioners to respond to recommendations made by Healthwatch North Somerset within 20 working days.
- 🌱 Make reports and recommendations about services known to commissioners, providers and regulators of health and social care services in North Somerset
- 🌱 A duty on service providers to allow entry to authorised Healthwatch North Somerset members to conduct announced or unannounced ‘enter and view’ visits to assess services.
- 🌱 A seat on North Somerset’s Health and Wellbeing Board (People and Communities Board), to promote health improvements and tackle health inequalities.
- 🌱 A mechanism to make recommendations to Healthwatch England, which may include advising the Care Quality Commission about special reviews or investigations to conduct.

Our Mission

By offering all people of North Somerset a strong voice we will improve the quality of local health and social care today and for the future.

Summary

This report summarises the feedback received by North Somerset residents regarding the Electronic Prescription Service EPS.

What became clear was that a significant number of people did not understand what the EPS system was and many mistakenly took this term to mean general on-line ordering.

In view of this confusion, and in addition to reporting on specific information gathered on the issue, this report will clarify what the EPS service provides.

Background

Healthwatch North Somerset seeks and listens to patient experiences. All feedback is recorded and reviewed quarterly by our Prioritisation Panel and if a theme is indicated the Panel may recommend that an evaluation of that specific issue or service is undertaken. This ensures we respond to the issues that matter to local people.

What is EPS?

The Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) is an NHS service that allows patients to choose how a GP processes their prescription and how it is sent to the place they would like to collect it from. The logo used to indicate the EPS is shown below.



The EPS relates to the interaction between the GP and the pharmacy collection point only. The system does not affect how the need for the prescription is communicated to the GP or the ordering process, which may differ depending upon the GP surgery in question.

Why use the EPS service?

The EPS is beneficial for patients who are receiving a regular prescription for a long-term condition as it enables patients to go straight to their chosen pharmacy to collect their medicines, rather than visiting their GP first to collect a paper prescription.

Additional information can be found in *Appendix 4 - Useful Information*, which shows a patient information leaflet produced by NHS England.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this report is to summarise the feedback received by local people with regard to the EPS system, to identify any lack of understanding and to provide clarification of the system.

There are a number of reasons why clarification of the service is necessary;

1. Clear information would enable patients to decide if they would benefit from using the Electronic Prescription Service.
2. Clear information would enable Patients to make informed choices about the management of their prescriptions and medications.
3. The service may especially benefit the older populations of the county if they live in rural areas.

We have identified two common myths associated with the use of the EPS

Myth 1

Patients need a computer to use the EPS.

Myth 2

Patients must stop using their local pharmacy if they register to use the EPS.

Methods

We undertook this review by speaking to local people who have first-hand and recent experience of using the EPS system.

To clarify our understanding of the current situation we also:

-  Arranged for Jo Howells, the Pharmacy Manager from Tower House Pharmacy to speak at the Healthwatch North Somerset Public Meeting held on 12th July. Minutes of the meeting and brief notes from the speaker can be found on our website (*under the 'Our Work' tab*).
-  Interviewed an experienced local community pharmacist.

The information and feedback in this report has been obtained from local people and was gathered through HWNS engagement activities which included attendance at and speaking with members of the:

-  Multicultural Friendship Association
-  Learning Disabilities Group - Brandon Trust

Several organisations and groups collaborated with HWNS to gather information on the use and understanding of the EPS including:

- 🌸 North Somerset Village Agents
- 🌸 North Somerset Senior Community Links
- 🌸 Carers Trust Phoenix
- 🌸 Nailsea and Backwell Diabetes Support Group

We devised a questionnaire which was made available electronically and the link was sent to a wide network of organisations as well as to HWNS members. Using a questionnaire to obtain feedback for specific questions can obtain a higher response rate than using open questions and it ensures consistency in responses. A questionnaire can simplify the collation and interpretation of responses.

We also made the questionnaire available as a paper copy which was available to those who did not wish to or could not access the electronic version and it was handed out to the public during engagement activities.

The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4.

This report also incorporates the intelligence received by Healthwatch North Somerset from the local public through a variety of means including:

- 🌸 Engagement activities
- 🌸 Letters
- 🌸 Emails
- 🌸 Website feedback
- 🌸 Telephone calls

Summary of our Findings

The following points summarise the findings of this report.

- 🌸 There was evidence that the public were confused to some degree about what the EPS service was. This was apparent from the responses they provided.
- 🌸 Responses from users of the EPS service were very mixed.

Many of the responses to the questions about the EPS system indicated a lack of understanding of how the system works or how effective it may be. This points to a need for more publicity and information about the system for the public.

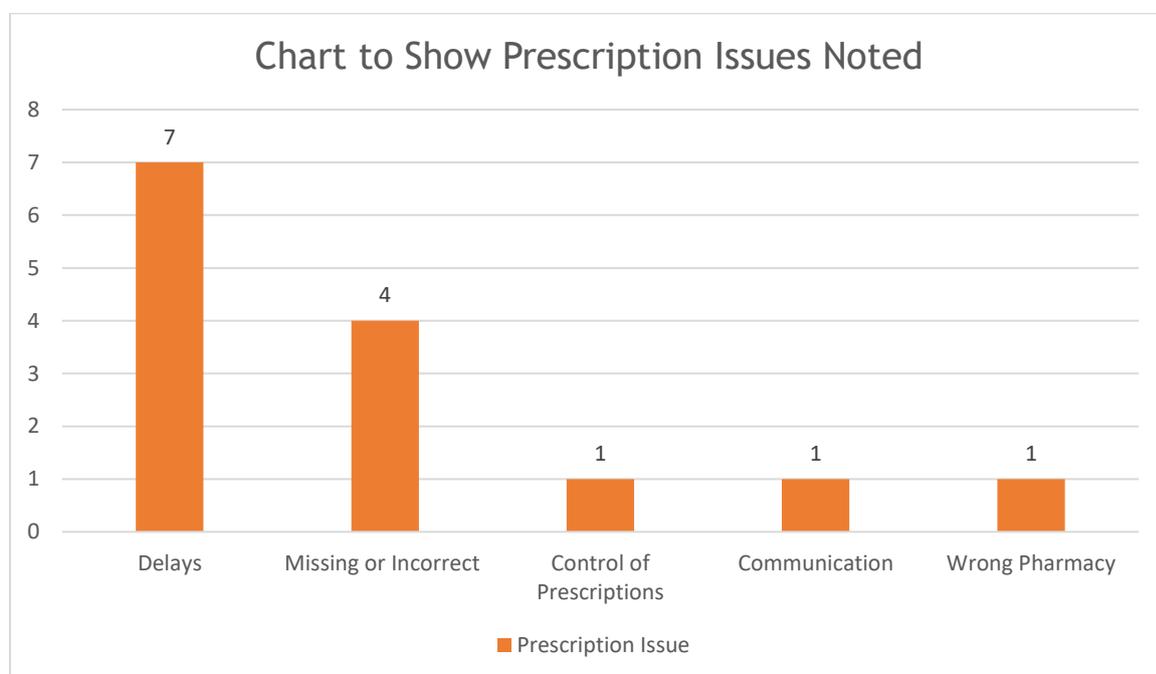
We received feedback from a representative sample of the North Somerset population, including the urban and rural areas of Weston, Clevedon, Nailsea, Congresbury and Yatton.

A total of 42 comments relating directly or indirectly to the issue of obtaining prescriptions were gathered between January and August 2016, 34 of which relate to a specific issue, rather than a general point of view.

The majority of comments received from the public were obtained after June 2016 following the Healthwatch North Somerset Prioritisation Panel recommendation to look this issue in more detail.

After analysis of these responses a total of 27 responses (14 negative and 13 positive) are attributed directly to the Electronic Prescription Service, the remaining 6 covered broader issues.

The chart below gives a breakdown of the themes identified (negative comments only).



Mythbusting

The following myths were consistent in the feedback received from the public.

Myth 1

You need a computer to use the EPS system

The EPS system relates to the communication channel between the GP and the pharmacy; not between the patient and the GP.

The patient must let their GP surgery know that they would like to register for EPS and nominate a pharmacy that they would like to collect their medications from. Or patients can ask their Pharmacy to Nominate them - They don't have to inform the GP

Patients can register for EPS via their GP surgery website or by email. - They DON'T have to inform their GP - the nomination is automatic once the Pharmacist is informed.

For those patients that are not comfortable using on-line services or who don't have access electronically, they can make the request to register for EPS in person, by telephone or by writing to their GP surgery.

Myth 2

You'll have to stop using your local pharmacy if you register to use the EPS system

A patient who registers to use the EPS will be asked to nominate a pharmacy that they would like to collect their medicines from.

This could be a pharmacy that is located close to their home, close to their place of work, a supermarket or wherever would be most convenient for them.

There are a variety of options and people can choose whichever is most convenient for them. For example; a parent of school aged children may decide that a pharmacy close to their children's school would be the most convenient collection point. For others an alternative option could be an on-line pharmacy service.

Electronic Prescription Service Myth Buster Sept 2016

Healthwatch North Somerset is a charity (No: 1158487) and a company limited by guarantee (England and Wales No: 08187141). Registered office 3rd Floor, The Sion, Crown Glass Place, Nailsea BS48 1RB

Feedback Received

The following table details the feedback received by Healthwatch North Somerset from the public relating to the Electronic Prescription Service and other pharmacy related issues in the period April - June 2016.

Negative Feedback received

Several errors with prescriptions. Under prescribing and not prescribing - ran out of important medication.
Prescription sent to wrong pharmacy.
Poor service. Has many medications and often prescriptions are missing collecting them. Has transferred to another pharmacy because of this.
Delays in getting prescriptions.
Repeat prescription which give 48 hours notice for. When collecting it pharmacy said it wasn't there but the computer said it had been done
Boots don't carry enough tablets. Recently waited 48 hours for prescription only to be told they had to wait for another chemist to bring some of the ones they didn't carry so it would be a further delay.
Repeat prescriptions taking over 3 days to provide and have to really chase to get it. If you're not in good health it's sometimes difficult to access services, lengthy waiting times.
Takes too long to compile a prescription.
Advised by practice nurse to order double repeat prescription but GP queried this.
Medicines that are prescribed keep changing so makes it different to manage as different colours and shapes.
Patient dissatisfied with pharmacist advice re side effects of taking medications together.
Used on-line prescriptions service but pharmacy are often out of stock of the medicines needed. Now use another pharmacist who always have medicines in stock. Call the chemist and order repeat prescription that way.
Might want three or four things in your prescription but only get one or two. Often out of stock.

There can be a delay if the receptionist actions the request because it has to then be cleared by a doctor. There is no electronic feedback on whether it has been actioned so if waiting for home delivery can be some days before realise prescription has not been processed. Delays on collection because pharmacies say they are too busy to process request.

Did not use EPS as wanted to keep control of prescription.

Getting the repeat prescriptions for medicines is always very accurate and good but not if have to get something in an emergency.

When EPS first introduced at surgery tried to use it but found it so unsatisfactory that never tried again. Can call the chemist to order a prescription this is probably a lot quicker than trying to use a computer.

Been using EPS for 6-8 months. When go to collect medication they first have to find prescription on computer then locate paper copy. In majority of cases then have to wait until prescription is prepared and checked so not streamlined service.

Received a personally addressed marketing leaflet from online company and had been very worried as had read it as having come from GP and thought had to start using the service.

Positive Feedback Received

Activity Details

Uses online service for repeat prescriptions only.

Using on-line service to get prescriptions and make non urgent appointments for years and it works really well.

Pharmacy have a list of medicines and what they are prescribed for delivered with the dosset box. Surgery pharmacy is fantastic. Can ring for meds one day and meds delivered the next day.

Pharmacists are a very useful group who give good advice on how and when to take medication, advise on over the counter purchases, side effects and sometimes point out errors in prescription. Would not be able to get this kind of information so quickly if went electronic.

Eight-week system of getting repeat prescriptions works well.

Very good service prompt supply of prescriptions.

Very good service in respect to repeat prescriptions.

Think it is about part of a government initiative to close some pharmacies under the guise of making it easier for patients to order prescriptions. Don't use it partly for that reason and partly because am already registered for a similar service with a local chemist but use the phone.

Have used this service (EPS) for a while. It saves having to go to surgery to collect prescription so cutting out the middle man and presumably takes pressure off receptionist. It does seem to take longer than the forty eight hours which it took to collect prescription before. This could be because surgery takes longer to get prescription to pharmacy or slow dispensing by pharmacist. Not a problem, but have to allow at least three days after prescription request. Generally an improvement.

Great service which saves time.

Generally very positive, but sometimes the surgery can leave a medication off the list.

It works well.

Not aware of the service or the range of things it can provide. Finds current arrangements for requesting prescriptions works well.

Regularly received prescribed medication from local pharmacy and had no need to order on-line.

Used the EPS system and had no problems. It worked well between Surgery and Pharmacy.

Recommendations

Healthwatch regulations stipulate that service providers and commissioners have a duty to respond to local Healthwatch reports and recommendations within 20 working days, in writing, to acknowledge receipt and to explain what action they intend to take or if they do not intend to take action they must explain why. (Health and Social Care Act 2012: Addendum to summary report: issues relating to local Healthwatch regulations).

Healthwatch North Somerset recommends the following based on the feedback received by the public in North Somerset.

We believe the following recommendation to be achievable, affordable and evidence based.

1. We recommend raising awareness of the public on the Electronic Prescription Service including prominent publicity in GP surgeries and pharmacies to dispel the myths surrounding the system and aid greater understanding.

Distribution of the Report

This report will be forwarded to the following parties for a response prior to becoming available to the wider public:

1. Local Pharmaceutical Committee
2. North Somerset Council
3. North Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group
4. North Somerset Community Partnership (NSCP)

It will also be forwarded to:

5. Healthwatch England
6. NHS England
7. Care Quality Commission

Appendix 1: Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following for participating in the provision of information for this report.

- 🌸 Pharmacy Manager Tower House Pharmacy - Jo Howells
- 🌸 Senior Community Links Development Worker - June Chainey
- 🌸 Senior Community Links Members
- 🌸 North Somerset Village Agents
- 🌸 Involvement Coordinator Avon and Wiltshire NHS Partnership - Stephen Budd
- 🌸 Pharmacist - David Shallcross
- 🌸 Multicultural Friendship Association
- 🌸 Learning Disabilities Group - Brandon Trust
- 🌸 Carers Trust Phoenix
- 🌸 Nailsea and Backwell Diabetes Support Group

Appendix 2: Responses from Commissioners & Service Providers

Electronic Prescription Service Myth Buster Sept 2016

Healthwatch North Somerset is a charity (No: 1158487) and a company limited by guarantee (England and Wales No: 08187141). Registered office 3rd Floor, The Sion, Crown Glass Place, Nailsea BS48 1RB

Appendix 3: EPS Leaflet

A new way to get your medicines and appliances

The Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) is an NHS service. It gives you the chance to change how your GP sends your prescription to the place you choose to get your medicines or appliances from.



What does this mean for you?

- If you collect your repeat prescriptions from your GP you will not have to visit your GP practice to pick up your paper prescription. Instead, your GP will send it electronically to the place you choose, saving you time.
- You will have more choice about where to get your medicines from because they can be collected from a pharmacy near to where you live, work or shop.
- You may not have to wait as long at the pharmacy as there will be time for your repeat prescriptions to be ready before you arrive.

Is this service right for you?

Yes, if you have a stable condition and you:

- don't want to go to your GP practice every time to collect your repeat prescription.
- collect your medicines from the same place most of the time or use a prescription collection service now.

It may not be if you:

- don't get prescriptions very often.
- pick up your medicines from different places.

How can you use EPS?

You need to choose a place for your GP practice to electronically send your prescription to. This is called *nomination*. You can choose:

- a pharmacy.
- a dispensing appliance contractor (if you use one).
- your dispensing GP practice (if you are eligible).

Ask any pharmacy or dispensing appliance contractor that offers EPS or your GP practice to add your nomination for you. You don't need a computer to do this.

Can I change my nomination or cancel it and get a paper prescription?

Yes you can. If you don't want your prescription to be sent electronically tell your GP. If you want to change or cancel your nomination speak to any pharmacist or dispensing appliance contractor that offers EPS, or your GP practice. Tell them before your next prescription is due or your prescription may be sent to the wrong place.

Is EPS reliable, secure and confidential?

Yes. Your electronic prescription will be seen by the same people in GP practices, pharmacies and NHS prescription payment and fraud agencies that see your paper prescription now.

Sometimes dispensers may see that you have nominated another dispenser. For example, if you forget who you have nominated and ask them to check or, if you have nominated more than one dispenser. Dispensers will also see all the items on your reorder slip if you are on repeat prescriptions.

For more information visit www.hscic.gov.uk/epspatients, your pharmacy or GP practice.

April 2013 ref: 4742

Appendix 4: Useful Websites

 **Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee**

www.psnc.org.uk

 **NHS Choices**

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/pharmacists/Pages/eps.aspx>

 **NHS Digital**

<https://digital.nhs.uk/eps>

Appendix 5: HWNS Electronic Prescription Survey

1. If you have a repeat prescription for medications or appliances, do you know about the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS)?						Response Percent	Response Total	
1	Yes					100.00%	4	
2	No (Go Straight to Question 6)					0.00%	0	
Analysis	Mean:	1	Std. Deviation:	0	Satisfaction Rate:	0	answered	4
	Variance:	0	Std. Error:	0			skipped	0

2. Do you use the EPS system?						Response Percent	Response Total	
1	Yes					75.00%	3	
2	No					25.00%	1	
3	N/A					0.00%	0	
Analysis	Mean:	1.25	Std. Deviation:	0.43	Satisfaction Rate:	12.5	answered	4
	Variance:	0.19	Std. Error:	0.22			skipped	0

3. If you do use the EPS system, please indicate below your GP surgery and your nominated prescription collection pharmacy or on-line pharmacy service.						Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question					100.00%	3
1	21/07/16 7:01PM ID: 41856395	Pharmacy					
2	21/07/16 10:48PM ID: 41864258	Mendip Vale (Yatton). Cohen in the surgery.					
3	25/07/16 9:08AM ID: 41963982	Mendip Vale Medical Practice and Pharmacy					

Electronic Prescription Service Myth Buster Sept 2016

Healthwatch North Somerset is a charity (No: 1158487) and a company limited by guarantee (England and Wales No: 08187141). Registered office 3rd Floor, The Sion, Crown Glass Place, Nailsea BS48 1RB

3. If you do use the EPS system, please indicate below your GP surgery and your nominated prescription collection pharmacy or on-line pharmacy service.

	Response Percent	Response Total
	answered	3
	skipped	1

4. If you are eligible to use the EPS system but choose not to use the service, please tell us why.

	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Personal Choice	0.00%	0
2 Experienced Difficulties Previously	100.00%	1
3 Concern Over Data Security	0.00%	0
4 Other (please specify):	0.00%	0
Analysis	Mean: 2 Std. Deviation: 0 Satisfaction Rate: 33.33	answered 1
	Variance: 0 Std. Error: 0	skipped 3
Other (please specify): (0)		
No answers found.		

5. Please use the space below to tell us about your experience of the EPS system, good or bad.

	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Open-Ended Question	100.00%	4
1 21/07/16 7:01PM ID: 41856395	Great service which saves time.	
2 21/07/16 10:48PM ID: 41864258	Generally very positive, but sometimes the surgery can leave a medication off the repeat list.	
3 23/07/16 5:03PM ID: 41926269	When it was first introduced at my surgery, I tried to use it, but found it so unsatisfactory that I never tried again. As I can phone the chemist to order a prescription, this is probably a lot quicker than trying to use the computer.	

5. Please use the space below to tell us about your experience of the EPS system, good or bad.

			Response Percent	Response Total
4	25/07/16 9:08AM ID: 41963982	It works well		
			answered	4
			skipped	0

6. Do you use any of the following web based GP services?

			Response Percent	Response Total				
1	Ordering Prescriptions		100.00%	3				
2	Making Appointments		33.33%	1				
3	Cancelling Appointments		0.00%	0				
4	Viewing Medical Notes		33.33%	1				
5	Consultation		0.00%	0				
6	Other (please specify):		0.00%	0				
Analysis	Mean:	3	Std. Deviation:	2.16	Satisfaction Rate:	26.67	answered	3
	Variance:	4.67	Std. Error:	1.25			skipped	1
Other (please specify): (0)								
No answers found.								

Healthwatch North Somerset
3rd Floor, The Sion
Crown Glass Place
Nailsea
BS48 1RB

Tel: 01275 851 400

Email: contact@healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk

 Find us on
Facebook Healthwatch North Somerset

 follow us on
twitter @healthwatchNS

Accessibility: If you require this document in another format, please let us know.



September 2016

© This document is protected by copyright and intellectual property laws and is the property of Healthwatch North Somerset. You may use the contents providing all original sources are indicated on the documents. You must not edit or otherwise modify the document, sell, rent or otherwise sub-licence material from the document without written permission from Healthwatch North Somerset. To seek permission, you may write to or email us. The images and logos of Healthwatch North Somerset are subject to copyright, design rights, licence and trademarks.

Electronic Prescription Service Myth Buster Sept 2016

Healthwatch North Somerset is a charity (No: 1158487) and a company limited by guarantee (England and Wales No: 08187141). Registered office 3rd Floor, The Sion, Crown Glass Place, Nailsea BS48 1RB