

Guidelines for Issuing Prescriptions for Incontinence and Stoma Appliances

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Key points

- a. The aim of this guideline is to provide guidance to GP practices, dispensing appliance contractors (DAC’s), and pharmacy contractors on the issue of prescriptions for incontinence and stoma appliances.
- b. Patients requiring incontinence or stoma appliances can have these dispensed either by a dispensing appliance contractor, a pharmacy contractor, or a dispensing doctor.
- c. It is imperative that patients are aware that they have a choice as to where their prescription can be dispensed.
- d. Prescriptions should only be issued at the request of the patient/patient’s carer.
- e. Requests for prescriptions should only be accepted from a Bladder and Bowel specialist nurse, Stoma specialist nurse, hospital ward staff or district nurse (If a prior agreement has been made with the GP).
- f. No appliances should be supplied to a patient without a signed prescription.
- g. Retrospective prescriptions will **not** be issued by the prescriber.

- h. No emergency supplies should be made without prior agreement with the prescriber.
- i. No free samples of the products should be supplied via **Dispensing Appliance Contractors (DACs)** unless the products are in line with the local **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICS)** formulary.
- j. Product quantities provided should be in line with the local **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB)** formulary recommendations, to avoid stock piling and waste.

Scope

This guidance applies to the following groups:

- GP Practices
- Dispensing Appliance Contractors (DAC)
- Pharmacy Contractors
- District Nurses
- Practice Nurses
- Stoma Nurse Specialists
- Bladder and Bowel Nurse Specialists
- Patients, Patient's Carers and Relatives

Background

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

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, as far as possible between pharmacies and Dispensing Appliance Contractors

- ii. 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.

Overview of Service Provision

- i. In the dispensing of stoma and urology appliances both dispensing appliance contractors and pharmacy contractors are required to provide several related essential services.
- ii. From the 1st of 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:** Dispensing Appliance contractors will have to provide this service; pharmacy contractors already provide it.

- **A dispensing referral:** if the Dispensing Appliance Contractor 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 Dispensing Appliance Contractor or pharmacy contractor. If the patient does not consent to this, then the Dispensing Appliance Contractor 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. Dispensing Appliance contractors 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 Dispensing Appliance Contractor 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 Dispensing Appliance Contractor or pharmacy contractor 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 Dispensing Appliance contractors 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. Dispensing Appliance contractors 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 Dispensing Appliance Contractor or pharmacy contractor shall ensure that appropriate advice is given to patients about any appliance provided to them to enable them to utilise, store and dispose of the appliance appropriately.
- Dispensing Appliance contractors 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. Dispensing Appliance contractors 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 Dispensing Appliance Contractors or pharmacy contractor's premises – or through a telephone care line.

Responsibilities of the GP Practice

- i. 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.
- ii. Prescriptions will only be supplied / issued at the request of the patient (or patient's carer).
- iii. Requests for prescriptions should only be accepted from a Bladder and Bowel specialist nurse or stoma specialist nurse, hospital ward staff or district nurse if a prior agreement has been made with the GP.
- iv. If GP's have any queries regarding Continence or Stoma products, they can contact the Bladder and Bowel Advisory Service, or Stoma specialist Nurse.

Advice and support available:

Bladder and Bowel Specialist nurse:

- **Peterborough:** 0330 726 0077
- **Cambridge, Ely, Fenland, Huntingdon and Wisbech:** 0330 726 0077

Stoma nurse

- **Cambridge University Hospital: 01223 216505**
 - add-tr.stomacare@nhs.net
- **Hinchingbrooke Hospital: 01480 442891**
 - nwangliaft.stomacarehh@nhs.net
- **Peterborough City Hospital: 01733 677584**
 - nwangliaft.stomacarepch@nhs.net
- **Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Kings Lynn: 01553 613613 or 01553 613234**
 - gehkl-tr.stomacaredept@nhs.net

- v. 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 Dispensing Appliance Contractor on the importance of only requesting items they actually need.
- vi. 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 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB Continence formulary and for Stoma appliances in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB Stoma formulary.
- vii. 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.
- viii. 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.
- ix. There may be 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.
- x. 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.
- xi. Ideally the Dispensing Appliance Contractor or pharmacy contractor used by the patient should be recorded in the patient's medical records by the prescriber.
- xii. If the patient has requested items that are not included in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB formulary, they should be either switched or referred to the Stoma or Bladder and Bowel nurse in line with the local formularies, for them to assess the clinical need and rationale prior to re-prescribing.

- [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB Continence Formulary](#)
- [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB Stoma Formulary](#)

Responsibilities of the Dispensing Appliance or Pharmacy Contractor

- i. 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.
- ii. 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.
- iii. Dispensing appliance or pharmacy contractors must **not** contact prescribers to provide retrospective prescriptions to cover a non-urgent situation.
- iv. No appliances should be supplied to a patient without a signed prescription.
- v. Some pharmacy contractors and appliance contractors operate a repeat medication service for certain vulnerable patients (with prior agreement from the GP practice). At the time of each repeat request the pharmacist or 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.
- vi. When dispensing an appliance, the patient should be provided with a written note of the pharmacy/ Dispensing Appliance Contractor name, address, and telephone number. Dispensing labels or other methods can be used.
- vii. The pharmacy/ Dispensing Appliance Contractor must provide a reasonable supply of disposable wipes and bags for specified items in the Drug Tariff.
- viii. The pharmacy/ Dispensing Appliance Contractor 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.
- ix. 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.
- x. Dispensing appliance or pharmacy contractors should not provide patients with free samples of items not included in the local Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB formularies.

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

- i. The patient (or patient's carer) should check and only order products which are actually required to reduce potential stockpiling and waste.
- ii. The patient (or patient's carer) is responsible for ensuring that the prescription for the incontinence or stoma appliance is sent or taken to the contractor of their choice for dispensing.

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

Responsibilities of the Bladder and Bowel Specialist Nurse / Stoma Specialist Nurse / District Nurse

- i. Patients must be informed of the various options as to where their prescriptions for incontinence and stoma appliances can be dispensed.
- ii. Patients should be given information that considers any religious, ethnic, cultural needs, factors such as physical or learning disabilities sight or hearing problems or difficulties with reading or speaking English.
- iii. Prescribing incontinence appliances - quantities and appliance choice prescribed for patients should be in line with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough integrated care board [Continence Formulary](#) and according to the needs of the patient.
- iv. Prescribing stoma appliances – quantities and appliance choice prescribed for patients should be in line with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough integrated care board [Stoma Formulary](#) and according to the needs of the patient.
- v. 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 and reviews.
- vi. 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.
- vii. Home visits and attendance at clinics should also be used as an opportunity to ensure patients are ordering appropriate quantities and all items prescribed are in line with the local Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB formularies.

Ongoing Issues

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 ICB Medicines Management Team to enable further investigation of the issues to take place.

Monitoring

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB in collaboration with our system partners CUHFT (Cambridge University Hospitals NHS foundation Trust) and NWAFT (North west Anglia NHS Foundation Trust) will review the information from the relevant data, at regular intervals. In addition, audits will be undertaken to monitor:

- GP practices with the highest spend
- Products prescribed
- New products on the market

Formulary links
[Stoma formulary](#)



[Continence Formulary](#)



References

- 1. [\(Pharmaceutical Services\) \(Appliances\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2009, amended in April 2010.](#)

Ratification Table

Ratification Process	Details
Authored by:	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board
Ratified by:	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Prescribing Group
Date ratified:	February 2024
Review date:	February 2027
Version number:	2

For further information and references, please contact the Medicines Optimisation Team
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