

Patient Survey 2013 - Report

Summary

This year, after consultation with patients, we decided to look at our repeat prescribing system. Over 4,000 patients (46%) at some stage throughout the year request a repeat prescription. Some of these prescriptions are regularly monthly ones and some maybe occasionally or seasonally required. We process approximately 300 prescriptions a week through our online request process and at least a further 500 prescriptions at the surgery, some via local pharmacy requests. As this service affects so many of our patients, it seemed a good idea to seek their views and opinion via the recent survey.

Currently, patients are able to request repeat prescriptions via post, online request form, at the surgery, or by pharmacist collection. Repeat prescriptions take 2 complete working days to be processed. However, if a prescription is collected from the surgery by a pharmacist, a further day should be allowed.

Surveys were posted on our website, emailed via our newsletter service, and posted/placed within the surgery for patient completion. This year 173 responses were received.

From the responses, we noted that 70% of those who responded did so online. When asked if their prescription was normally ready after 2 complete working days, 80% responded *Yes* with about 4% saying only *sometimes* or *never ready*.

We asked patients if they felt it was essential that they take their medication every day, therefore if they ran out they were unable to wait for their prescription to be processed through the normal channels. 49% of patients responded that they would be unable to function without their medication, while 51% thought it would be possible for them to wait. We asked patients for their comments and these are included in the survey results.

We then asked patients if their medication had been changed recently and why they thought this might be. Patients were given four options, these being; best practice; safety; cost effectiveness; not sure. 13% thought this was because of best practice and 16% thought this was because of cost effectiveness. Again, patients were invited to comment. We discovered that 83% of patients who responded did not pay for their prescriptions, however of these, 36% of these were over 65 and therefore universally exempt from payment.

Actions to be taken:

- In-house prescribing review at practice
- Prescribing service leaflet and information

Over the next few months the practice will undertake a review of the prescribing system taking into account points raised from the recent survey as shown below. We will also develop a clear and concise guide to our repeat prescribing service. We will ask our Patient Reference Group to review and comment on our new Prescribing guide, which we will then publicise on our website and in our waiting room.

Medications changes by the surgery

All general practices are being asked to ensure that they spend their drug budget effectively. Unfortunately, in real terms most surgery's budgets have been reduced and are being asked to be even more cost efficient. Prescribing schemes usually run through a local area and are not targeted at a particular patient but at a specific drug or group of drugs. This year, practices in Thanet have been asked to look at medications ranging from pain killers through to asthma inhalers. When the practice has to change a medication, the GP will always have and will review individual patients note to ensure that the change is appropriate for that patient.

Involving Patients

From comments in our survey, it seems that patients are aware of the pressures on the NHS to be as cost effective as they can be. The practice will continue to prescribe as effectively and rationally as possible whilst talking and involving patients to make sure that they understand the reason for the changes made. We will provide as much information to patients as possible about future prescribing changes.

Contacting the Prescription Clerk

Patients may not realise that we have two dedicated Prescription Clerks available. Both clerks are available each morning during the hours of 9.00 to 12.30, to help with any prescription queries. We will publicise this service.

Processing times of prescriptions

The usual processing time for prescription requests is 2 complete working days, or three if medication is to be picked up from a pharmacy. Online request forms are downloaded on daily basis at 8.15a.m each week day morning.

Processing of Urgent Prescriptions

Our survey shows that there is sometimes a need for **essential** medication to be processed urgently. If essential medication is urgently requested, we will try to

process this for patients on the same day of the request, however patients will not be able to collect emergency prescriptions before 6pm on that day. We are not able to process prescriptions immediately. We are aiming to reduce the need for urgent prescriptions by clarifying and improving the system.

Pre-payment Certificates

For those who have to pay for prescriptions we will publicise the pre-payment and exemption schemes which may benefit patients financially. Details can be found at the surgery or from <https://apps.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppcwebsales/>

Messages to Patients via prescriptions

Increase the use of the messaging prompt available on the repeat slip side of the prescription. We can now use this to request that you book an appointment or inform us of a result, i.e. inr result required, blood tests etc which may be needed prior to your next prescription request etc. We would encourage patients to look and respond to these requests.

Conclusions

The repeat prescribing system affects so many patients, that we feel it is important to ensure that this service runs as effectively as possible and that patients have all the information they need to get the best from this service. Although the current service works well, there are irritations for both patients and the practice staff, which we like to reduce.

Thank you for your time.