

Dear pharmacy team,

We are writing to you to provide information on a new service that will soon be live in your pharmacy, the new Real Time Exemption Checking (RTEC) service. We have been working with your dispensing system supplier to develop this new service.

This pack contains:

- Cover letter – for pharmacy reference
- Business change material – for pharmacy reference
- Poster – for patient reference. Please display this in your pharmacy

RTEC allows pharmacy teams to digitally check if patients are eligible for free prescriptions when dispensing medication. The system uses the patient's NHS number, forename, surname, date of birth and postcode to conduct the check. The patient's status will display in your dispensing system during the dispensing process as either 'exempt' or 'unknown' where no exemption is found. Patients will no longer be required to sign the declaration if the system shows a valid exemption has been found. If the exemption status is 'unknown', you should revert to your normal process, ask the patient whether they pay for their prescriptions and have them sign the declaration.

Key changes

Token submission

For patients that are confirmed as digitally exempt when an RTEC check is undertaken, these tokens can be managed in the same way as age exempt and do not need to be submitted to the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) at month end.

Please note: You should continue to follow your local controlled drug process as this has not changed with the introduction of RTEC.

If evidence is presented when RTEC has responded 'unknown'

If RTEC returns an 'unknown' and the patient can provide evidence of a valid exemption, the patient may need to update their details. It is important that the information relating to a patient's exemption held by the NHSBSA is up to date and matches the details held by their GP. If the patient needs to update their personal details held against their exemption, please advise them to contact the NHSBSA using the contact details provided at the bottom of this letter. Alternatively patients can access www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ExemptionChecking for further

information. If the patient's personal details are incorrect on their prescription, please advise them to contact their GP to update.

Training materials

Training materials on how the service works and/or is implemented into your existing system will be provided by your system supplier. Any technical questions relating to this should be raised with your system supplier.

More information on help with health costs

There is more information for patients about exemptions and their entitlement to help with health costs on the NHSBSA website: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk. For instance the Eligibility Checker tool allows patients to check if they're entitled to free prescriptions:

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/penalty-charges-dont-get-caught-out/check-you-tick

Additional or future pharmacy RTEC information may also be listed at the PSNC webpage: www.psn.org.uk/rtec

NHSBSA contact details

(Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm and Saturday 9am-3pm. Calls charged at local rates)

Call us on 0300 330 1341

For medical and maternity exemption certificates, and prescription prepayment certificates

Call us on 0300 330 1347

For NHS tax credit exemption certificates

Call us on 0300 330 1343

For HC2 certificates

Textphone - If you're deaf or hard of hearing and you have a textphone (sometimes called a minicom), you can contact us using the Text Relay service. Dial 18001 then the relevant phone number.