

Prescriptions update: Response to social media posts

Following recent social media posts regarding prescription services, the practice would like to address comments/concerns in relation to the management of prescription requests.

What is the current turnaround time?

Historically the practice has worked to 2 working days, unless the request is of an urgent nature, upon which it can be done the same day. The current advised turnaround is 5 working days. Although the majority are currently actioned in 3 working days, 4 if there's a bank holiday.

Why has the time increased?

During the introduction of the new clinical system this was extended to 4-5 days. This was as a result of greater validation checks being required in the new system as well as a backlog of requests created by the transfer of data. The updated turnaround change was advised on patient prescription slips, our telephone message, and on the practice website. This was updated in April, not recently as mentioned in some media posts. Additionally, the changes in availability of Co-Codamol has resulted in reduced dosages of this medication. As such the majority of these requests require clinical approval by a GP. Historically they were managed on a repeat basis. The practice is also in the process of securing additional clinical resource to address increased demand for medication. This will be in place by August.

Are there any plans that it will go back to 2 days?

The practice endeavours to provide the best possible turnaround on prescription requests. However our new system also requires each prescription request to be reviewed as a one off to ensure that limits can be applied to volumes requested. This is taking a lot longer than expected given the volume of medication requests. We are hopeful that this will be completed by the end of September upon which we will advise patients accordingly of any changes.

When are they sent to the Pharmacy?

Our colleagues at Graeme's Pharmacy collect prescriptions 3 times a day. A final drop is posted to their premises at the end of the business day. On a daily basis there can be around 220-260 prescriptions collected.

Why is my prescription refused if I put it in early?

Repeat prescriptions are actioned by our patient advisors. They will only reject a medication request on the following basis:

- If 1 months supply of medication is being requested more than 7 days in advance of when the previous supply was due to finish.
- If 2 months supply of medication is being requested more than 14 days in advance of when the previous supply was due to finish.
- If a repeat is requested and the medicine a controlled drug e.g. Morphine.
- If multiple medicines are on the same repeat prescription, only those that exceed the above requirements will be refused. Any others that are within it, will be accepted.

Are prescriptions Electronic?

In Scotland no. All prescriptions require a wet signature by a GP before being issued. As a result, once printed they are reviewed by clinicians and then signed before being put into the file for collection.

The Practice approves on average 1300 prescriptions per week.

Who should I contact if my prescription is not ready?

Please e-mail bmp@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk and title the e-mail Prescription Query. Currently our call lines are exceptionally busy between late morning and afternoon, so e-mail is best to prevent patients waiting longer than necessary on the telephone. Currently around 150 patients call the practice between 9am and 5:30pm so it can be difficult to get through. The practice is looking at ways to address longer wait times and consequently further resource is currently being secured to address this.

If I'm unhappy, who should I feedback to?

We value constructive feedback and see both positive and negative feedback as an opportunity to continuously assess our performance. If there is a particular issue which a patient feels we need to investigate, please get in touch with us directly which will allow us to fully understand the issue and respond to any concerns. Please e-mail bmp@lanarkshire.nhs.co.uk.

If patients prefer to leave online comments, we respectfully request that they do not name individuals, either staff or patients, or to make unsubstantiated or inaccurate allegations.

Thank you

Biggar Medical Practice.