

To: SHA Chief Information Officers
cc: SHA Electronic Prescription Service Leads
PCT Chief Executives (via 'The Week')
PCT Electronic Prescription Service Leads

Date: 18 July 2012

Gateway reference number: **17912**

Dear Colleagues

Restarting SHA process for PCTs to be listed in the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) Authorisation Directions 2008 as amended.

We are pleased to inform you of the resumption of the process for listing PCTs in the EPS Authorisation Directions.

Purpose

PCTs need to be listed in the Primary Medical Services (Electronic Prescription Service Authorisation) Directions 2008 as amended ("the EPS Authorisation Directions 2008") before prescribers can use an advanced electronic signature on electronic prescriptions.

This letter and the supporting documents set out the process that SHAs need to follow to request Secretary of State Directions for PCTs.

Background

Information on the four implementation stages of the EPS "path to live" can be found in the document *Electronic Prescription Service Release 2: Implementation Strategy Phase 3: The Stages of Implementation*, on the EPS webpage:

<http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/eps>

PCTs should have already implemented Stage 1, the Foundation Stage. PCTs yet to be Directed should be moving to **Stage 2, Preparing for EPS Enablement (obtaining Secretary of State Direction)**. Stage 2 ensures that :

- PCTs have an opportunity to influence the approach and timing of the deployment of EPS in their area.
- Patient choice continues to be maintained, and not limited by availability of the service.

- Dispensing contractors are informed about the future activities of prescribers in their area and have an opportunity to prepare, during the 3 month notice period between an announcement that a PCT will be added to the Directions and the Direction being issued.

PCTs who previously submitted an application before the process was suspended, should be encouraged to reconfirm that they still want to be directed, update their previous application using **Annex A** and resubmit it to their SHA.

Process to follow

SHA's will want to consider their own local processes to be able to endorse applications and these should be as transparent as possible. SHAs should advise PCTs of the local timescales to enable SHAs to submit all requests to DH by the date in column A of the timetable at **Annex B**.

The request form (**Annex A**) to include a Primary Care Trust in the Secretary of State Directions should be signed by the SHA CIO.

Timescales

There are two closing dates for applications, recognising the levels of readiness across the NHS.

It is vital that any submissions are received by DH on or before the published dates (column A of the timetable). Any submissions received after this date will not be considered in this round.

PCT geographical boundaries will be abolished from 1 April 2013, we are still in the process of considering what, if any, process will be in place from 1 April 2013.

The application form should be submitted to *eps.authorisation@dh.gsi.gov.uk*

Additional Support

If you have any queries on this process or wish to discuss it in more detail please contact your NHS Interface Manager in the first instance. Their contact details can be found at <http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/eps/nhs/imp/contacts/>

Yours sincerely,

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