

# National roll-out of electronic prescription service

All prescriptions across England will be digitised to make staff and patients' lives easier, Primary Care Minister Jo Churchill has announced today.

The electronic prescription service (EPS) will be rolled out nationally next month, following rigorous testing involving 60 GP practices and hundreds of pharmacies.

Almost 70% of all prescriptions are already being prescribed and dispensed through EPS and there has been positive feedback from GPs and pharmacies. Once the roll-out of the final stage is completed, nearly all prescriptions will be sent electronically.

A unique prescription barcode will be given to patients, which can be scanned at any pharmacy to retrieve medication details. This information is held on the secure NHS database and will allow a patient's prescription to be accessed quickly by GPs and pharmacies.

The EPS will save the NHS £300 million by 2021 by increasing efficiencies, reducing the amount of paper processing required and reducing prescribing errors.

It will increase efficiencies across the NHS by:

- eliminating the need for patients to pick up repeat prescriptions from their GP
- allowing prescribers to digitally sign and cancel electronic prescriptions, rather than using a physical signature
- reducing the amount of administration needed around prescriptions, and reduce the volume of prescriptions that need to be stored

Primary Care Minister Jo Churchill said:

Digitising the entire prescription service is a key part of keeping up the drive to make the NHS fit for the 21st century. This will free up vital time for GPs and allow pharmacists to spend more time with their patients, and save millions of pounds a year.

It's another important step towards eventually making all prescriptions paperless. We are continuing to improve technology across the NHS, which will ultimately improve care for patients.

Dr Ian Lowry, Director of Digital Medicines and Pharmacy at NHS Digital, said:

Every prescription that is sent electronically saves money for the NHS by increasing efficiency. The system is also safer and more secure, as prescriptions can't be lost and clinicians can check their status online.

This is a huge milestone to reach, and one which benefits patients, GPs, pharmacists and the NHS as a whole.

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## We will robustly defend human rights here at the UN and beyond

The UK associates itself with the statement made by the representative of the EU on behalf of EU member states. Allow me to set out our national approach at this time.

The UK Government's policy is that the UK will leave the EU on 31 October. After we have left, we will continue to work closely with the EU in pursuit of our shared interests and values, and will remain committed to human rights and to the Rules Based International System.

Mr Chair, 74 years ago the first UN Member States signed the UN Charter, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and reaffirming the dignity of human beings. One of the very first tasks of this Committee, set up specifically to focus on human rights, was to agree the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Human rights, and the idea that the relationship between people and states is not one of subservient obedience, but one where the State has obligations to the individual, are core to everything the United Nations stands for. As the Foreign Secretary has made clear, at the UK's core is a strong moral anchor. Make no mistake; we will robustly defend human rights here at the UN and beyond.

Mr Chair, there are three priorities that I would like to focus on: i) Freedom of religion or belief; ii) Gender equality and the rights of LGBT people; iii) Media freedom and civil society space.

Firstly, the UK remains resolutely committed to championing freedom of religion or belief. Building mutual understanding and respect between communities is essential to fighting intolerance. We will never stand by while individuals are persecuted, designated as 'extremists', or arbitrarily detained, because of their religion or ethnicity.

Mr Chair, be in no doubt that we will continue to speak up for the rights of religious minorities across the world.

Secondly, the UK will continue to advance gender equality and vigorously defend the rights of LGBT people.

Let me be clear that attempts to roll back hard-won gains on access to sexual and reproductive health are a shameful attack on women's rights. It is harrowing that 23,000 women die each year from dangerous backstreet abortions. Meanwhile, heinous acts like rape and sexual violence proliferate as weapons of war.

That is why, next month, the UK will host a conference on preventing sexual violence in conflict with the objective of strengthening justice for survivors and holding perpetrators to account.

Equally, we cannot stand silent while people face persecution because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. All too often, state authorities allow the perpetrators of such hate crimes to escape justice. No one should suffer discrimination because of whom they love.

Finally, a rich civil society is vital to safeguard our human rights. To this end, media freedom is essential. Journalists must hold the powerful to account. Never should media workers live in fear for their lives for doing their job. We encourage those Member States who have not yet signed the Media Freedom Pledge to do so, and join the Global Coalition to fight the curtailment of media freedom.

All too often, those who protect human rights face threats because of their work. While states introduce increasingly restrictive legislation to shrink civil society space. We are committed to championing civil society, both in the field and in discussions at the UN. That is why we are pleased to announce today the UK's candidacy for the NGO Committee, which plays a vital role in promoting civil society at the UN.

Mr Chair, we can do better, and we must. States must fulfil their commitments now, not at a far off date when some political, economic, or development stars might align.

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## **We strongly condemn any act of intimidation and reprisal**

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of United Kingdom as well as on behalf of 69 other countries.

Civil society and human rights defenders play a crucial role in supporting our work at the United Nations and the healthy functioning of democratic

institutions. They not only enrich our process of decision-making, but their contributions also ensure that the impact of the decisions we make here at the UN reach those furthest behind, in line with our existing obligations and commitments, in particular under the UN Charter and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Acts of intimidation and reprisals against those who cooperate, seek to cooperate or have cooperated with the UN undermine the credibility and effectiveness of the UN as a whole, including the human rights system.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report and share his alarm about the growing number of reprisals, which take many forms. We share in particular the concern that women human rights defenders are disproportionately exposed to gender-specific barriers, threats and violence, and are alarmed at the number of attacks against journalists and media workers. We strongly condemn any act of intimidation and reprisal, whether online or offline, against individuals and groups who cooperate, seek to cooperate, or have cooperated with the UN. In this respect, we urge States to prevent and ensure adequate protection against such acts by raising awareness and by investigating and ensuring accountability and effective remedy for such acts, whether perpetrated by State or non-State actors as well as to inform the Secretary-General and the Human Rights Council accordingly. We must be determined to do all we can to enable them to work and live in safety and without fear of any kind of intimidation or violence. In this regard, we welcome the positive steps taken by those States who have responded to acts of reprisals against persons and groups in their respective countries.

We welcome the adoption of Human Rights Council resolution 42/28, which invites the General Assembly to remain seized of all work in this area. We are convinced that the exploration of all avenues of action is crucial. We highly appreciate the work of Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Mr. Andrew Gilmour, who has led the UN efforts to put an end to this condemnable practice. We strongly believe that this mandate ensures a more systematised, coordinated response to the deeply worrying issue of intimidation and reprisals, including against human rights defenders, and will help to put an end to impunity for these attacks. We encourage Member States to cooperate with the Assistant Secretary-General and assist him to fulfill his mandate. We place special emphasis on raising awareness and on the dissemination of best practices.

Mr. Chair, notwithstanding the primary obligation of States to prevent and address reprisals, and to uphold the highest standard of human rights promotion and protection, the UN system also has a duty to prevent and respond to alleged cases of intimidation and reprisals against those who provide information or seek to engage with it, and to ensure accountability when these acts occur. In this respect, we encourage all UN bodies, mechanisms and agencies to strengthen the collective response to reprisals and continue to give detailed consideration to such cases brought to their attention, and to take immediate steps, including by submitting them to Assistant Secretary-General Gilmour and to the Secretary-General as contributions for his annual report. We would also welcome more frequent reporting on the issue of reprisals and follow-up by Assistant Secretary-

General Gilmour, including here in New York, thereby increasing awareness, accountability and ensuring a more timely response.

Mr Chair, civil society and human rights defenders are important parts of vibrant societies which encourage openness, transparency and dialogue between people and those in power. The UN, as a global community, must be an example of best practice and ensure all civil society organisations and human rights defenders who wish to engage with the UN system are able to do so without fear of reprisal or intimidation. This will send a message that we value their contribution and will continue to mitigate the risks they face and provide them with opportunities to engage meaningfully with the UN system.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

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## [UK to host 93rd Interpol General Assembly in 2024](#)

The UK will host the General Assembly of the international police organisation, Interpol, in 2024 – the largest global gathering of senior law enforcement officials and heads of ministries.

The announcement was made today (18 October) during the 88th Interpol General Assembly in Santiago, Chile following a vote by member countries.

Interpol is a crucial partner to the UK, facilitating international police cooperation between 194-member countries. The General Assembly is Interpol's highest governing body, comprising representatives from each of its member countries and responsible for major decisions affecting general policy and resources. It usually takes place over four days and is attended by approximately 2,500 delegates.

The General Assembly is a key opportunity to drive innovation and leadership in police cooperation and tackle major crime trends and security threats facing the world, including organised crime, terrorism and cybercrime.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

We are delighted to host the Interpol General Assembly in 2024 and this highlights the UK's strong commitment to make the world a safer place.

The UK is and will continue to be a global leader on security and justice. We are determined to build on that role by strengthening our international security relationships where it matters and enhancing our capabilities at a domestic, European and global level

to protect the public. This includes investing in organisations like Interpol, that are best suited to tackling the security threats we face.

It also demonstrates our vision as a global security leader, looking to invest in strong relationships with those who matter most to our security.

Working alongside the UK's Interpol National Central Bureau, the National Crime Agency, we continue to cooperate on issues such as tackling child sexual exploitation and organised crime.

The UK has been a proud member of Interpol since 1928 and shares the organisation's vision for international law enforcement cooperation. The UK continues to work with them to lead and drive the agenda for positive change in security.

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## [China opens doors to British Beef](#)

The British beef industry is set to benefit from an estimated £230 million boost as the Chinese government today (18 October) finalised details of a historic UK-China agreement.

For the first time in over 20 years, UK farmers and beef producers will have full access to the Chinese market, marking the end of a ban imposed by China following the BSE outbreak in 1996.

Today's announcement follows extensive inspections by the Chinese authorities – who have confirmed that British beef producers meet the necessary standards to export to their market – and marks the final step in securing access.

The Chinese authorities have cleared four beef sites for export in the first instance – with further sites under review – and the first exports are expected to be shipped in the next few months.

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers said:

Sealing this landmark agreement with China is huge news for our world-renowned food and farming industry, meaning more people across the globe can enjoy British beef.

Today's milestone marks another step towards unlocking the industry's full potential, and reflects our ambition to maximise trading opportunities for British produce across the world as the UK leaves the EU.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

Chinese diners can now enjoy the best beef in the world. I'm delighted that our dedicated UK producers can now sell quality products to one of the world's largest economies, supporting local jobs and bringing millions of pounds to the UK economy each year.

This is another step forward in realising our global trading ambitions with unbeatable British food. As we leave the European Union, we will continue to break down market access barriers to make it easier for UK businesses to trade across the world.

The China-UK beef agreement is the culmination of several years of engagement between UK and Chinese government officials. [China's ban was lifted in June last year](#) when market access engagement for UK beef exports began.

It follows a number of inspections and inward missions hosted by the [Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board](#) (AHDB), in partnership with Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and Hybu Cig Cymru (Meat Promotion Wales HCC) and other industry bodies, as well as government departments and agencies.

AHDB International Market Development Director Dr Phil Hadley said:

This is a great end to a very successful year for our red meat exports. This new agreement is fantastic news for our beef processors who will now have access to another market outside of the EU.

We continue to work collaboratively with government to create new opportunities for our red meat exports and today's announcement is a testament to the persistence and hard work of all involved.

We look forward to seeing the first shipments of beef arrive in China and hope to replicate the success of our pork exports in the beef sector.

The announcement comes after China recently approved five British pork plants to export products to China, which will build on a market which is already worth £70 million per year. We look forward to further approval of qualified UK pork plants by the end of the 2019.

China is currently the UK's eighth largest export market for food and drink, with more than £610 million worth of products bought by Chinese consumers last year.

Additional information:

This agreement is the product of collaboration across government, across the Defra group including APHA, RPA and VMD, with collaboration from FSA and DAERA in Northern Ireland.