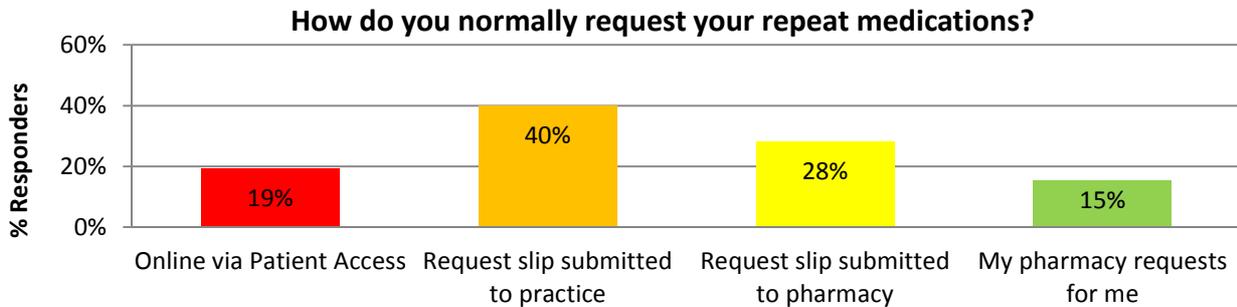




During late 2015 we worked with our PPG to seek your views on the process of requesting and collecting repeat medication. 228 patients responded and this is a summary of what you told us.

Question 1 – How do you normally request your repeat medications?

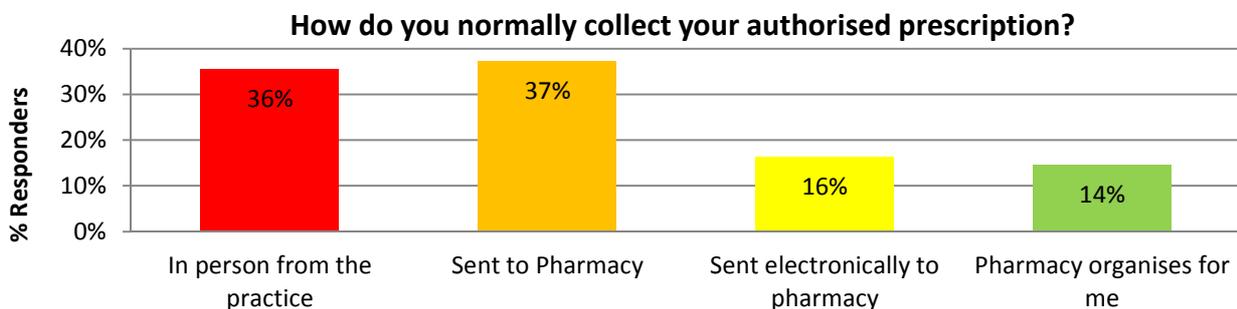


Our response

Prescription requests dropped into the practice will be signed by a GP no later than the next working day, many on the same day if they are received in the morning. Please remember that if you drop your request into the pharmacy they still need to send it to the practice for signing. Only 19% of patients request their medication online despite the fact that over a third of our patients are registered for online access. We appreciate that not everyone is comfortable with computers but for those that are this has a number of benefits including being able to see a fully up-to-date list of your repeat medication and the status of your request.

We appreciate that it is appealing to have your repeat prescriptions requested by the pharmacy but we would suggest you only do this if you receive all of your repeat items on a regular basis. If you only need some items there is a risk that items may be ordered that you do not need.

Question 2 – How do you normally collect your authorised prescription?



Our response

If you collect your prescription from the practice it will be available at reception shortly after the GP has signed it. Please remember that local pharmacies visit once a day to collect prescriptions so you may need to consider this when making your request. If you have a nominated pharmacy as part of the Electronic Prescribing Service (EPS) your signed prescription will be sent to your pharmacy within minutes of being signed by the GP. We appreciate that this may not be for everyone but we would encourage you to consider it as it can be audited if there are problems.



Question 3 – How long do you have to wait for your prescription to be ready to collect?



Our response

Once received, our GPs will authorise all repeat prescription requests by the end of the next working day – often sooner. However you also need to bear in mind that:

- Local pharmacies only visit the practice to collect signed prescriptions once a day so this will normally add another working day to the process
- Pharmacies need time to prepare your prescription – some items will be in stock but some will need to be ordered and are usually delivered the next working day. This could therefore add two working days to the timescale. Some special order items may take much longer than this to order

We are keen to work with local pharmacies to minimise the waits for medication but we would strongly suggest that you allow a week between requesting your prescription and visiting the pharmacy to collect it. We hope that your prescription should be ready much sooner than this and we would like to hear from patients that have to wait longer than a week.

Question 4 - Please give your thoughts about where delays occur and how they could be reduced

Here are the key themes that emerged from what you told us:

Prescriptions not ready when agreed with the pharmacy

“Prescriptions may not be ready on day advised and then have to wait for it to be made up...”

“Although my prescriptions are sent electronically they are not usually ready”

Online access and the electronic prescription service

“Making requests online makes the process speedy”

“Some of my prescriptions have been sent electronically to Boots - I am sure this is the way to go”

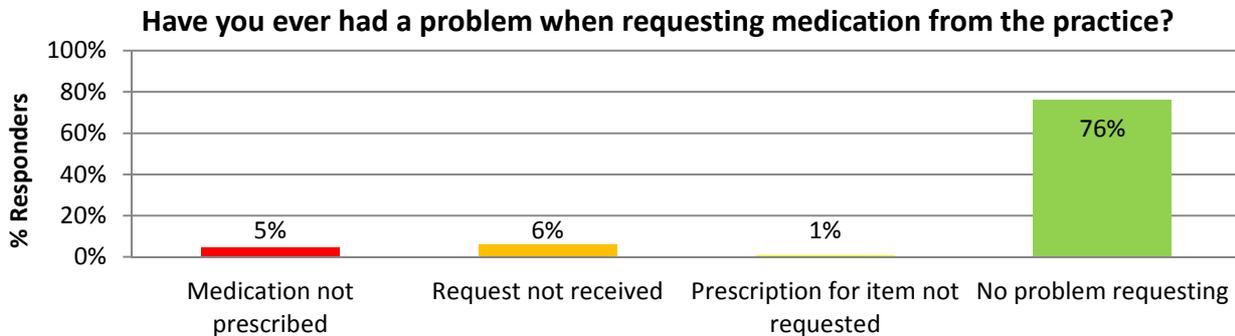
Pharmacy Working Practices

The pharmacy continually mislays repeat prescriptions and doesn't inform the patient when they haven't got all items.... before preparing part of the prescription.

“You go to pharmacy after two days, never ready they search on computer for ages, then you wait another 10 - 15. I've taken to going in four days later and it might be ready”



Question 5 – Have you ever had problems when requesting medication from the practice?



Our response

We are delighted that over three quarters of you have never had a problem but we are keen to eliminate errors for those of you that have.

Occasionally our GPs may choose not to prescribe a medication that has been requested if it is no longer needed or if they determine a review is needed before issuing any more medication.

Similarly we may sometimes prescribe an alternative if we know that it is out of stock or we are asked to by the Clinical Commissioning Group. We accept that in these instances we need to ensure that the reason is clearly and promptly communicated to the patient.

The majority of patients who said that their request had not been received by the practice also stated that they order via the pharmacy. Please remember that the practice will only produce a prescription if a request is received from the patient or the pharmacy on your behalf.

Question 6 – Please give details if you have experienced a problem requesting medication

Here are the key themes that emerged from what you told us:

Occasional problems with electronic prescribing

“Have had no delays. Please don't put it all online”

“Delays have occurred in the electronic transmission to the pharmacy”

Communication between the practice and the pharmacy

“Sometimes the medications are not available from the supplier and [the pharmacy] has to inform the surgery/ask for replacement.

“The Dr prescribed me a medication that had been out of stock for some time, pharmacy asked if I could get alternative prescription which was actioned quickly”

Communication between the practice and the patient

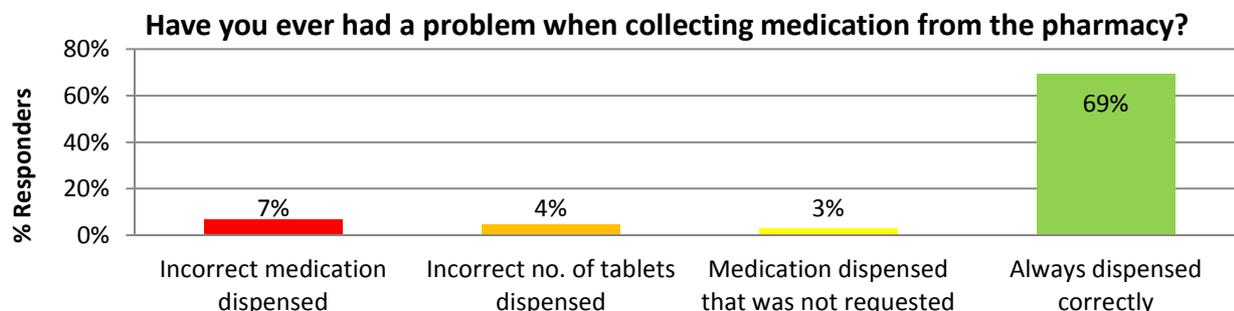
“Reviews not updated on system....A consultation took place but [the medication review date] still showed as outstanding”

“Found [prescription] paperwork unclear, but guess NHS standard”

“Improved communication with patients [is needed]”



Question 7 – Have you experienced a problem when collecting medication from the pharmacy?



Our response

We are pleased that over two thirds of patients have not experienced a problem but we are keen to work with local pharmacies to discuss ways in which these errors can be minimised.

We would suggest that you check your medication before you leave the pharmacy to ensure that it is correct. Once you have left the pharmacy, the pharmacist is unable to take the medication back and it has to be destroyed causing huge wastage. If you spot a problem please ensure that it is corrected there and then and notify the practice so that we can audit this.

Question 8 – Please give details if you have experienced a problem when collecting medication

Here are the key themes that emerged from what you told us:

Medications out of Stock

“...Sometimes they don’t have the medication in stock and are only able to give me a limited supply and I am asked to “pop back in” in a day for the rest”

“Sometimes we have to wait if expected deliveries don’t happen”

Communication between the pharmacy and the patient

“Sometimes the whole prescription is not ready at the same time, told by pharmacy when to collect the rest”

“Frequent delays. Medications [are] often not ready on the day it is agreed to be picked up”

Dispensing Issues

“Only asked for ventolin inhaler but was also given brown inhalers”

“On several occasions some items were missing and I had to go back for a second time to get them - they were on the request but had not been dispensed”

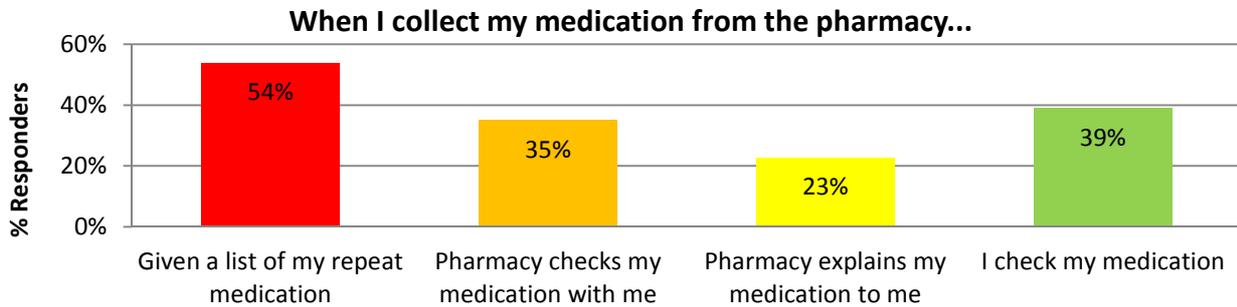
Waits in the pharmacy

“It seems most times you have to wait while they hunt through many other prescriptions then again while they make up your prescription”

“More staff in chemist perhaps” ...”There is often a delay in the pharmacy (up to 30 mins)”



Question 9 – When I collect my medication from the pharmacy...



Our response

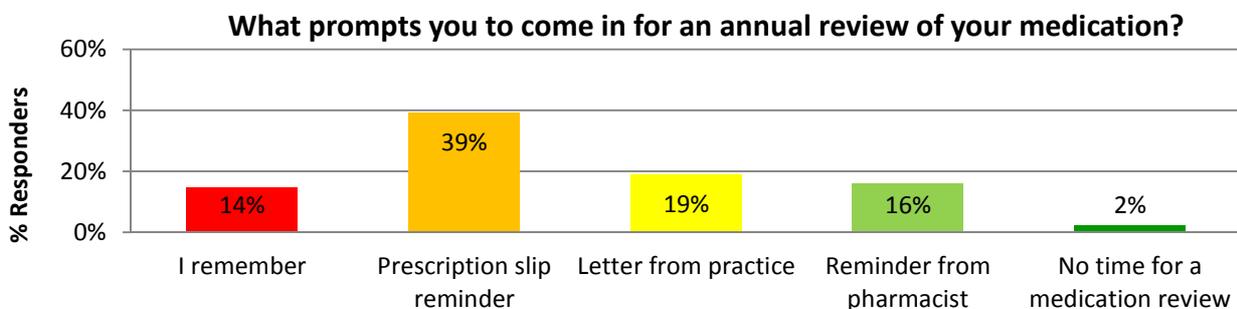
Ideally the pharmacy should provide a copy of your repeat medication request slip when they dispense your items – please ask if you do not receive it.

Similarly it is best practice for the pharmacy to ensure you understand what your medication is for and when you should take it. If you are unsure we would strongly encourage you to ask.

It is possible that checks are happening without you being aware but we would strongly encourage you to get the pharmacist to check you have the correct items before you leave the store. Once you leave the store the pharmacy cannot take those items back and they are wasted.

We will talk to local pharmacies about how this process can be improved.

Question 10 – What prompts you to come in for an annual review of your medication?



Our response

These responses reinforce our suspicion that the current systems to remind patients to come in for a medication review are not robust. Often patients fail to spot a message on the repeat request slip and some might not even see it if they are not given this by the pharmacy (see Question 6). Historically patients have only been sent a letter when they are significantly overdue an annual review or when there is particular cause for concern.

In response to this we have decided to implement SMS text messaging to alert patients of the need for a review approximately one month before it is due. Patients without a mobile phone will be sent a letter.

We would strongly encourage you to respond to any reminder to arrange an annual medication review. These check that you do not have any side effects and that the medication remains appropriate to managing your condition. Failure to attend for an annual medication review could put your health at risk.

Our Top Five Steps to Improve the Prescription Process

- 1. We will introduce a new system of text message reminders to inform you that your annual medication reviews are due. Patients without mobile phones will be sent a letter. Read more about this in our Spring Patient newsletter.**
- 2. We have agreed with the pharmacies in Thame that they will notify us of items that are out of stock for a prolonged time so that our GPs can consider an alternative to avoid unexpected delay.**
- 3. We will work with the pharmacies in Thame to produce a leaflet to explain how the prescriptions process works and what your options are to ensure it works best for you.**
- 4. We will take care to ensure that we offer patients an explanation if we reject or change your medication.**
- 5. We will encourage as many patients as possible to order repeat medication online and to sign up for the Electronic Prescription Service so the we can audit turnaround times much better.**

The Top Five Ways that you can help things run smoothly

- 1. Request your repeat medication at least a week before it is due to run out so that any unexpected delays do not cause problems.**
- 2. If you are comfortable with computers, register for online access so that you can request repeat medication from an up-to-date list in the comfort of your own home. Consider nominating a preferred pharmacy so that you can also benefit from the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS).**
- 3. If you have repeat medication that you no longer need or use, please notify the GP so that it can be cancelled. It is easy to add back onto your medication list if needed.**
- 4. Check your medication before you leave the pharmacy to ensure that it is correct and you understand what it is for. This will help reduce wastage.**
- 5. Book an appointment for a medication review if you are reminded to do so. These are important to ensure that you remain healthy.**

Please note: not all questions were answered by all respondents resulting in some questions totalling less than 100%. Some respondents gave multiple answers to some questions result in total exceeding 100%

If you would like to share your views on our proposals to improve prescribing please;

E-mail: therycotepractice@nhs.net

Write to: **The Rycote Practice, Health Centre, East Street, Thame, Oxon, OX9 3JZ**