

Updated March 2020

PSNC Briefing 038/18: Change of pharmacy circumstance guide: ODS codes and planning required should your ODS code change

This briefing for pharmacy contractors explains pharmacy ODS (F) codes and those actions needed if your pharmacy circumstances are going to change (e.g. location or ownership). Pharmacy relocation, closures or sales are subject to regulatory requirements, but this briefing focuses on mitigating IT/Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) impacts where such changes are planned. PSNC recommends that pharmacy contractors planning changes work through this guide and let the local NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) team know at least **one month ahead** of the planned date for the change and changes to it. The full transition period lasts for at least one month. The timescale above is separate from the up to 14-day notice period stated in the “notice of commencement” form¹.

Background

What is an ODS code?

The Organisation Data Service (ODS) code is the unique identifying code used by the NHS for various purposes, including supporting national NHS IT systems, such as EPS. Most NHS providers have an ODS code and for pharmacies, it is a five-character code beginning with the letter F. It appears at the top of the pharmacy’s schedule of payments monthly document (received from the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA)). It has previously been known as OCS, NACS or F codes. You or others can check your ODS code at the NHS Digital [ODS portal](#).

What could be affected by a change of ODS code?

If your pharmacy’s ODS code is changed or deactivated, the following are affected:

- NHSBSA payments to the contractor;
- connectivity to NHS Services, e.g. use of EPS, allocation of Summary Care Record (SCR) accesses etc.;
- EPS patient nomination settings and the eRD (Electronic Repeat Dispensing service) cycle;
- NHS Smartcards need updating by the Registration Authority (RA);
- NHSmail; NHS website (previously NHS Choices) listing of the pharmacy; your pharmacy PMR system; and
- more.

Planning well in advance of the change, by the contractor, the PMR system supplier and the NHS, is necessary to avoid disruption to patients, services and your payments. Also you could seek to avoid ODS change not required:

When does a change of ODS code apply?

When may a new ODS code be required?	<p>A new ODS code may be required when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a new pharmacy opens; • there is a change of (legal) ownership, where the contractor buys out a business on a non-debts and liabilities basis (i.e. the outgoing contractor requires payment for all items dispensed up to the date of sale and existing debts and liabilities remain with the outgoing contractor); or • a pharmacy relocates (this may not be the case for a ‘no significant change’ or short distance relocation) – the local NHSE&I team will determine whether a new code is required.
When is an ODS code deactivated?	<p>An ODS code ceases to be ‘active’ if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a pharmacy closes and ceases to provide services; or • a contractor closes and/or ceases to provide services as part of a Regulation 26A consolidation.

¹ **Note about formal commencement timescales to PCSE:** After your market-entry application is approved, you will receive a “notice of commencement” form. This form explains a formal notice period up to 14-days which must be returned to Primary Care Support England (PCSE) and in it you must specify a date, which must be no more than 14 days before the date on which you intend to start providing NHS services.

When should an ODS code be retained?	<p>The existing ODS code should be retained (i.e. a new ODS code should NOT be required) when there is a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘no significant change’ or short-distance relocation of the pharmacy – the local NHSE&I team will determine whether a new code is required; • change of ownership of the equity of the business (e.g. shares), where the purchaser (new contractor) buys out the existing (contractor) company including debts, liabilities and/or access to bank account – this may result in a change of company name or trading name; • change to contractor’s company registered name (e.g. from a sole proprietor to a limited company); • change to the contractor’s company trading name or telephone number; or • remaining contractor in a Regulation 26A consolidation – the remaining contractor may be at the remaining pharmacy or may be the contractor moving premises (whose pharmacy is closing); • change to the boundary of a contractor’s NHSE&I local office, resulting in the pharmacy being in a different NHSE&I area.
---	---

Who may request a new ODS code or deactivate one?

The local NHSE&I team requests a change or deactivation of an ODS code to the NHSBSA; the NHS Digital ODS team implement the change.

Pharmacy contractor checklist for use where an ODS code may change

1. Notifying NHSE&I and others

NHSE&I, your system supplier and others require good notice of the date of a change that will necessitate a new or deactivated ODS code - to avoid patient inconvenience and IT disruption. It is recommended that you:

- ❑ **Inform the local NHSE&I team at least one month ahead** of the expected date of a change that will require a new ODS code (contact details at: psnc.org.uk/nhse) – the opening of a new pharmacy, a change of legal ownership or ordinary relocation. The local NHSE&I team need to inform the NHSBSA in good time for them to make changes. You can update them if there has been a change (also see point below).
- ❑ **Formally notify PCSE if required:** (See page 1 footnote).
- ❑ **Inform your PMR system supplier:** You should inform your system supplier as soon as possible about the change. You can notify them by email so that you have an email audit trail. If you are changing your system supplier, notify both the outgoing and incoming system suppliers. Re-notify if there is a change to the date.
- ❑ **System supplier liaises with NHS Digital:** Your system supplier contacts NHS Digital to schedule migration or removal of EPS nominations. *If required*, you may [request the supplier escalate EPS issues to NHS Digital](#).

The parties involved - your system supplier, NHSE&I, NHS Digital and NHSBSA need to be kept informed of relevant dates and developments, as appropriate.

2. Liaising with NHSE&I and others: the ODS allocation process

The allocation of an ODS code and changes can be made on the requested date if sufficient notice has been given.

Use the following information as a guide to the process:

- ❑ **Adjustments to the expected date of the change:** Throughout the process, your local NHSE&I team and your system supplier should be informed of any adjustments to the expected date of the change (e.g. because of a delay with premises refurbishment).
- ❑ **Notification of a new ODS code:** You and your system supplier should be notified. NHSBSA add an ODS code to update the NHS Spine pharmacy database (a process that currently takes at least 10 days).
- ❑ **New ODS code for system supplier configuration:** Once your pharmacy’s future ODS code is listed within the NHS Spine pharmacy database (see previous step), then your system supplier can proceed to configure your PMR system. You should ask your system supplier for regular reports on progress with this process.
- ❑ **Your system supplier must advise NHS Digital of the date they plan to configure use of the new ODS code:** Your supplier will request that your pharmacy should begin using the new ODS code at the agreed date and time, and that if nomination changes are to be made, these are made at the same time.
- ❑ **System supplier implements the new ODS code:** Your system supplier changes your PMR system from the old to the new ODS code on the relevant date. This adjustment allows you to start using the new ODS code.

3. Other IT issues to consider before the change

- **EPS Nominations:** Nominations are set for patients against a pharmacy's ODS code, so where there is a new ODS code, these must be migrated manually by NHS Digital. It is vital that you give at least **one month's notice** of the date of the opening, change of ownership or ordinary relocation that will trigger this. It is also important to inform patients about changes:
 - Where there is a change of ownership, the new contractor must according to the terms of service (i) explain to each patient that the ownership of the pharmacy premises has changed and (ii) ask each patient if he or she wishes to maintain the nomination for the pharmacy premises. That can be done before the change where possible or within six months of the change of ownership.
 - For pharmacy relocations, contractors may be asked to confirm that patients have been informed and this information might be shared with NHS Digital to request migration of EPS nominations.
 - For pharmacy consolidations, the assurances that patients have been informed is part of the commencement notice for the consolidated business.

You can check the pharmacy's total number of nominations prior to the ODS code change by referring to the 'Nominations by dispenser' spreadsheet downloadable at [NHS Digital's website](#). Usually your supplier will liaise with NHS Digital to schedule the migration for an appropriate time, if it has been approved.

- **NHSmial:** If your ODS code or address will change, you should contact the NHSmial Pharmacy Admin team (pharmacyadmin@nhs.net) to ask them to adjust your NHSmial premises shared account email address as needed. Your new email address might include the new ODS code / address if there is one. Your old email address may be retired and/or may redirect to the appropriate account. If any pharmacy staff members who have a personal NHSmial account which has access to the premises shared account are ceasing to be employed at the pharmacy, follow please contact NHSmial Admin to request their removal from the shared mailbox and also link those new staff needed. Make sure that you still have staff members with personal NHSmial accounts which can access the premises shared account. During ownership changes the outgoing owner may support transfer of an older mailbox to ensure continuity of a mailbox - e.g. so there is not delay/disruption of emails relating to patient referrals communicated to older shared addresses. An outgoing owner may make requests to NHSmial Pharmacy Admin team from their NHSmial shared mailbox. See more at [FAQs on the NHSmial webpage](#).
- **Smartcards:** You will need to ask the [RA](#) to make the changes. It is suggested allowing at least two weeks for changes and asking the RA about their timescales. Currently, there is no automatic notification to the RA service of changes to ODS codes. Old ODS codes may not require immediate removal from smartcards; you may need to keep the old ODS code for a period in case the ODS change occurs later than is expected.
- **Private CD Pharmacy Contractor Code:** NHSE&I local teams (or someone for them) should use the relevant [NHSBSA form](#) to inform NHSBSA if a one of these code is required because of a new ODS code.
- **Other:** If opportunity/relevant consider: phoneline/email 'redirects', updating internet infrastructure if an opportunity, keeping internet distribution point boxes if within the building accessible for engineers in case of a later internet problem, and relocating or adding power sockets to support more optimised workflows.

4. Issues to be resolved immediately before the change:

- **Discuss with your system supplier whether they can disable automatic overnight downloads of prescriptions** on the contract end-date.
- **Process any partly dispensed prescriptions** - all completed scripts should have both the Dispense and Claim messages sent. Ensure that there are no prescriptions which have the dispensed status, but for which you have not sent the Claim message. Some contractors choose to phone patients to remind them about medicines which are awaiting collection.
- **Print tokens** for all prescriptions which cannot be completed and claimed prior to the scheduled change. Speak with your system supplier about whether there is an automated way to do this.
- **Return to the Spine all prescriptions which cannot be completed and claimed** prior to the scheduled change. Ensure prescriptions with owings are processed as required.

5. Things to do after the change in ODS code and after changes

- **Smartcards:** Once all staff have had their Smartcards amended to reflect the new ODS code, check that everyone can log in and use EPS.
- **EPS:** It is important to claim for a script immediately after your supplier changes the local configuration to the new ODS code (occurs shortly after NHS Digital migrate EPS nominations). This triggers the new ODS code to be flagged as EPS live on the NHSBSA system. This change will occur on the first Wednesday after the claim, and NHS website will be updated, with the ODS code showing as EPS live the Monday following (please note this time lag). PMR suppliers have advised PSNC they support a real or appropriate special EPS 'validation' message script being sent by them or the contractor swiftly (within a working day). If you believe the new ODS code is not yet appearing on NHS website after this time lag, contact your system supplier who may escalate this issue to NHS Digital.
- **eRD (Electronic Repeat Dispensing):** Check that the electronic repeat dispensing prescription schedule has been restored correctly.
- **EPS Nominations:** Your system supplier should let you know once all of the nominations have been transferred across. If necessary, you can check that these are as expected, by checking the pharmacy's total number of nominations after the ODS code change by referring to the 'Nominations by dispenser' spreadsheet at the [NHS Digital website](#) – await upload of data from the relevant period noting that there is a time lag until information becomes available.
- **NHS website:** Check that the pharmacy's profile information is updated if the ownership or address changes. Note there will be a time lag of around 10 days until the changes occur and NHS website information is updated. If this has not happened after this time, report this to your system supplier. If this cannot then be resolved, ensure your supplier has escalated this issue to NHS Digital. During the time lag, GP practices will not be able to nominate the new code. However, you can set nominations yourselves during that time.
- **Nomination lists of local GP practices:** Following the change to NHS website, the EPS nominations list within the clinical systems at nearby GP practices should also be updated. If this is not the case, the GP may need to update their system, requesting support from their IT support or system supplier if required.
- **Schedule of Payment:** Check that all is in order with the first FP34 Schedule of Payment received post-change, i.e. that it arrives and includes the ODS code you expect.
- **NHSmail:** Check that adjustments have been made by sending a test email to your account, and then checking that you can login and view the email.
- **Data Security & Protection Toolkit:** Refer to [Check pharmacies linked to HQ code](#) after the change.

Change of pharmacy system supplier

Many of the same issues need to be considered with an IT system change. The best way to help minimise any impact when there is a change of system, is to inform outgoing and incoming system suppliers with sufficient notice of the date for the change to take place. System suppliers should be able to assist contractors to complete the change of IT systems. Ensure partially processed prescriptions are not left on the old system.

Closing a pharmacy

If your pharmacy is closing permanently, it is important for nominations to be removed by NHS Digital in a timely manner to prevent patients' prescriptions being sent to a closed pharmacy. You must give at least three months' notice to NHSE&I before closing a pharmacy (6 months for a 100-hour pharmacy), and then inform your system supplier of the closure. It would be helpful to keep NHSE&I informed if there are any changes to allow them enough time to instruct NHS Digital to schedule and carry out removal of EPS nominations. You will also need to deal with partially dispensed prescriptions and the return of relevant prescriptions which have not been dispensed back to the Spine.

If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information please contact [Daniel Ah-Thion, Community Pharmacy IT Lead](#).