

URGENT PRESCRIPTION POLICY

London Road Surgery

How we handle routine and urgent prescription requests — information for patients

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document title	Urgent Prescription Policy
Version	1.1
Date issued	15 October 2026
Author	Reneal Patel, Clinical Pharmacist (v1.0); revised by Kirstin Frost, Joint Practice Manager (v1.1)
Approved by	Dr Jaison Mathew, GP Partner and Prescribing Lead
Review date	October 2027 (annually), or sooner if NHS services or practice processes change
Applies to	All patients registered at London Road Surgery, and all practice staff handling prescription requests
Classification	Public — for publication on the practice website

Contents

1. Purpose.....	3
2. Scope	3
3. Why we have this policy	3
4. Definitions	3
5. Responsibilities	3
5.1 What we will do.....	3
5.2 What we ask of you	4
5.3 Our reception and administrative team.....	4
6. Principles.....	4
7. How prescription requests are handled.....	4
7.1 How to order	4
7.2 Routine prescription requests.....	4
7.3 What counts as an urgent prescription	4
7.4 How urgent requests are handled	5
8. If you have run out of medication	5
8.1 Emergency supply from a pharmacy	5
9. Controlled drugs.....	5
10. Respect for our staff.....	5
11. Text message we may send you.....	5
12. Review of this policy.....	5
13. Related documents and references	6
14. Version history	6

1. Purpose

Due to the increasing number of patients requesting prescriptions on an urgent basis, London Road Surgery has implemented this Urgent Prescription Policy to ensure safe, fair, and clinically appropriate processing of all medication requests.

This policy reconfirms our prescribing processes so that all patients are aware of how requests are managed, what counts as urgent, and what to do if you run out of medication.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all prescription requests made to London Road Surgery, including:

- Repeat prescriptions
- Acute (one-off) prescriptions
- Medications initiated by hospitals or specialists
- Replacement of lost or stolen prescriptions

It applies to all patients registered with the practice and to all practice staff who handle prescription requests.

3. Why we have this policy

We are receiving a growing volume of requests for immediate prescriptions. Requests outside the normal prescription process significantly impact both clinical and administrative capacity and increase the risk of prescribing errors.

Every prescription is checked by our team before it is issued. Rushing that process makes mistakes more likely. This policy is therefore essential to protect patient safety and staff wellbeing — and it means every patient is treated in the same way.

4. Definitions

Term	What it means
Repeat prescription	Medication you take regularly, which a clinician has authorised for you to re-order.
Acute prescription	A one-off or short-course prescription that is not on your repeat list.
Routine request	Any prescription request processed within our standard timeframe of at least 3 working days.
Urgent prescription	Medication required within 24 hours to prevent serious deterioration in health (see section 7.3).
Working day	Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays.
Controlled drug	A medicine with extra legal controls on prescribing and supply, for example some strong painkillers and some medicines for ADHD or sleep.
Pharmacy First	An NHS service through which community pharmacies can provide some medicines and treatments, including urgent supplies of repeat medication.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 What we will do

- Process all prescription requests safely, within the timeframes in this policy.
- Have every urgent request reviewed by our pharmacy team, and escalated to the duty doctor where needed.
- Apply this policy fairly and consistently to every patient.

5.2 What we ask of you

- Order repeat medication in good time — 7 calendar days before you run out.
- Tell us clearly why a request is urgent if you believe it meets the definition in section 7.3.
- Use your community pharmacy or NHS 111 if you have run out of medication (section 8).
- Treat our staff with courtesy and respect (section 10).

5.3 Our reception and administrative team

- Reception and administrative staff must follow this policy at all times.
- Staff are not authorised to make exceptions to this policy.
- Staff are not permitted to interrupt clinicians during surgery sessions for urgent prescription requests.

6. Principles

- Safety first — every prescription is checked properly, however it is requested.
- Fairness — the same rules apply to everyone.
- Clinical judgement — only our pharmacy team or a doctor decides whether a request is clinically urgent.
- The right route — running out of medication is best handled by a community pharmacy, not an urgent GP request.

7. How prescription requests are handled

7.1 How to order

You can request a prescription through:

- The NHS App
- Anima
- SystmOnline
- On paper, handed in at the surgery

We **do not** accept prescription requests by email or by phone.

7.2 Routine prescription requests

All prescription requests are processed routinely within a **minimum of 3 working days**.

- Requests submitted after 12:00 noon will be counted as received on the next working day.
- This timeframe applies to repeat prescriptions, acute prescriptions, and medications initiated by hospitals or specialists.

Patients are responsible for ordering repeat medication in good time (7 calendar days) to avoid running out.

7.3 What counts as an urgent prescription

Urgent prescriptions are defined as **medication required within 24 hours to prevent serious deterioration in health**.

Examples may include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Anticonvulsants (e.g. epilepsy medication)
- Certain cardiac or transplant medicines
- Insulin
- Oral steroids for adrenal insufficiency
- Palliative care medications

Urgent prescriptions are **not**:

- Requests made late due to running out of medication
- Requests for convenience or travel
- Medications started by hospitals that have not yet been ordered by the patient
- Requests to bypass routine processing times

7.4 How urgent requests are handled

- When you make the request, tell us the medication and why it is needed within 24 hours.
- Your request will initially be reviewed by a member of our pharmacy team, who will decide whether it is clinically urgent.
- If it is urgent and within their scope of practice, they will issue the prescription and send it to your nominated pharmacy.
- If it is urgent but outside their scope of practice, it will be escalated to our duty doctor.
- If it is not agreed as urgent, it will be processed as a routine request, and we may direct you to your pharmacy or NHS 111.

8. If you have run out of medication

If you have run out of important repeat medication and cannot wait for routine processing, you may be able to obtain help from a **community pharmacy**. This is the appropriate route for emergency medication needs, not urgent GP prescription requests.

8.1 Emergency supply from a pharmacy

Through the NHS Pharmacy First service, pharmacists may be able to supply a short course of previously prescribed medication without a GP prescription.

You should:

1. Contact your usual pharmacy to check whether they can help, or
2. If they cannot, contact NHS 111 (online at 111.nhs.uk or by calling 111), who can direct you to a pharmacy providing this service.

If you go to a pharmacy directly without a referral from NHS 111, the pharmacist may still be able to help, but you may be charged. Some medicines, including certain controlled drugs, cannot be supplied in this way.

9. Controlled drugs

If a prescription for a **controlled drug** is lost or stolen:

- The incident must be reported to the Police.
- A crime reference number must be obtained.
- This may be required before any replacement prescription is considered.

Replacement of controlled drugs is not automatic and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

10. Respect for our staff

This policy is in place to protect both patients and staff. Our team cannot make exceptions to it, so please do not ask them to. Any abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff will **not be tolerated** and will be managed under our policy on unreasonable, violent and abusive behaviour.

11. Text message we may send you

If you request an urgent prescription that does not meet the definition in section 7.3, you may receive the following message:

Text message

London Road Surgery: All prescriptions take a minimum of 3 working days to process. Urgent requests are only for medicines needed within 24 hours to prevent serious illness. If you have run out of medication, please contact your pharmacy for an emergency supply or call NHS 111. Thank you for your understanding.

12. Review of this policy

This policy is reviewed annually by the practice, or sooner if NHS services or our processes change.

13. Related documents and references

- London Road Surgery — Prescribing Policy
- London Road Surgery — Dealing with Unreasonable, Violent and Abusive Patients Policy
- NHS 111 — 111.nhs.uk
- NHS — Pharmacy First service

14. Version history

Version	Date	Author	Summary of changes
1.0	28 Jan 2026	Reneal Patel	First issue.
1.1	15 Oct 2026	Kirstin Frost	Moved into practice template and written for patients; practice name corrected; ordering routes, urgent request process and Pharmacy First wording added.