

This is one of a series of fact sheets written for Welsh community pharmacies about IT developments in Wales



One of the projects to support the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (April 2005), is looking at ways of streamlining the current prescription payments system for community pharmacies in Wales.

This project is known as the Electronic Transmission of Claims (ETC) project and links closely with

another NHS project by the Prescribing Services Unit to modernise prescription pricing and payments.

Since March 2008, the ETC project has been in a 'scoping' stage, to determine the best way that ETC can be delivered to Welsh community pharmacies and what benefits such a system can deliver.

FAQs (Frequently asked Questions)

Will Wales use the same system as England?

A large part of the 'scoping' stage of this project is to understand the options Wales has for providing a streamlined and more efficient payment service for its Welsh community pharmacies.

One of the options available to Wales is to use – as far as possible – the same system currently being developed for England.

When will I know more about ETC?

Currently, a 'Statement of Requirement' document is being considered by the national Community Pharmacy IM&T Programme Board and a further update will be provided about this during Q4 2008.

What will be the benefits of an ETC system?

Whilst the details of this are not yet confirmed, it is anticipated that Wales will benefit from the same efficiencies as are being proposed in England; namely a more accurate advance payment prior to final adjustments being made.

5 Key Principles of ETC Proposals

1. Transcription (keying) errors at PSU will be negated and the quality of all prescriptions received electronically will be priced with 100% accuracy
2. Pre-notification of prescription claims will help avoid missing or unreadable scripts
3. Will improve accuracy of 'monthly advance payment' of prescription claims
4. Is a preparatory step to take advantage of any possible future policy changes to the payment cycle
5. Is capable of being extended to ancillary claims

Will the payment cycle be changed?

In England, the Department of Health has advised that the payment cycle for making prescription payments will not change and the Welsh Assembly Government is currently considering whether this will be the same in Wales.

If payments are not made any quicker, what other benefits will ETC bring?

If the payment cycle doesn't change, other than more accurate advance payments, ETC will be a necessary IT development that standardises dispensing data in preparation for any future developments that may arise.

What are the timescales for the ETC project?

ETC is being delivered in separate Stages – stage 1 being the 'scoping' stage. The next stage will be prototype development of the agreed system from the 'Statement of Requirement' but this won't happen until early 2009, to line up with the parallel modernisation project being delivered by the Prescription Services Unit for NHS Wales.