



Community Pharmacists are responsible for dispensing and supplying prescriptions. On occasions dispensed prescriptions may not be collected by the patient or their representative.

This may be because the patient's prescription has changed, or they no longer require the prescribed medication.

However, sometimes failure to collect a dispensed prescription may be because the patient or representative is unable, unwilling or has forgotten to collect the medication. In such circumstances reduced compliance may have serious consequences for the patient's health or point to another issue.

While it can be difficult to know why a dispensed prescription, has not been collected, pharmacists should use their **professional judgment** when considering any patient safety implications and how risks can be reduced within the pharmacy. Risk could include safeguarding concerns and the risk to a patient if a prescribed medication is not taken (this includes medicines used to treat conditions that can have serious/fatal consequences if left untreated such as insulin, epilepsy medication).

Safeguarding responsibilities

Safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs is a key priority for all pharmacy teams who [are required to be](#) competent and empowered to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of patients. Pharmacy teams should be mindful of this when reviewing uncollected prescriptions.

Reducing risk

Pharmacy teams may want to think about actions they could take to **reduce risks** associated with uncollected prescriptions. This might include:

- A text or phone call service to contact patients/representative to discuss or remind them about uncollected prescriptions.
- Clearing down uncollected prescription regularly (e.g. every week/month) to prevent patients from collecting large quantities of medication at the same time and to identify when prescriptions are not being collected.

When considering appropriate actions pharmacists should consider:

- What they already know about the patient, this might include:
 - their medical history
 - safeguarding concerns
- The nature of the prescription including:
 - the implications of not taking medication, including for a long-term conditions
 - potential consequences if a patient has not collected urgent medication (e.g. antimicrobials)
 - valid reasons for not collecting a prescription e.g. the patient's condition or symptoms has changed & they no longer require the medication (e.g. for a delayed or repeat prescription).

Always think about the patient behind the prescription

In an ideal world there would be a seamless communication system which notifies the pharmacy, prescriber and patient of concerns around an uncollected prescription.

In the absence of this, pharmacists should use their **professional curiosity** to consider why a prescription hasn't been collected.

Think about what this might mean for the **patient behind the prescription** and consider appropriate next steps, this could include:

- reviewing the patient's medical record (PMR) or [summary care record \(SCR\)](#) to identify issues
- contacting the patients GP to discuss concerns.