How Real Time Exemption Checking works

Can your patients claim free NHS prescriptions?

Real Time Exemption Checking (RTEC) allows you to automatically check if your patients have a known exemption and can claim free NHS prescriptions.

The technical solution enables your PMR system to digitally check and automatically apply an NHSBSA exemption or DWP benefit to your patient's electronic prescription.

Benefits of using RTEC:

Key benefits of RTEC include:

- **Loss reduction:** minimise the risk of contractor loss by ensuring that Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) prescriptions are submitted with the correct status, particularly when the category should be exempt.
- **Simplified token handling:** for patients confirmed as exempt through an RTEC check, tokens can be managed in the same way as age exempt and do not need to be submitted to the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) at month end. RTEC eliminates the need for manual exemption checking, patient declarations and token submission when an exemption is confirmed. It also reduces the number of EPS tokens which need to be printed, completed by patients and then be sent from pharmacies to the NHSBSA.
- **Enhanced efficiency:** streamlines digital processes by removing manual checks, patient declarations, and token submissions, saving time for pharmacy staff.
- **Ensured accuracy:** with real-time data verification, RTEC provides real-time confirmation of exemption status at prescription collection.
- **Improved patient experience:** RTEC saves time and reduces confusion regarding prescription exemptions. Patients can be confident about their exemption status, helping them save money if they were previously unaware of their entitlement and avoid penalty charges for incorrect claims. RTEC increases convenience by reducing the need for patients to provide physical proof of exemption from prescription changes.
- **Saving of NHS resources:** contributes to reducing fraud, errors, and costs.

- **Fast responses:** delivers responses within three seconds of submitting the request.
- **Confusion prevention:** it is a national system and as a live exemption check, RTEC removes the need to hold exemption details in other systems, preventing confusion and sharing of incorrect advice which can lead to incorrect claims.

NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) exemptions:

- maternity exemption certificates
- medical exemption certificates
- 3 or 12 month Prescription Prepayment Certificates
- HC2 certificates
- Tax Credit Exemption Certificates

Department for Work and Pensions exemptions:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit Guarantee Credit
- Universal Credit Lower / Higher threshold

RTEC will confirm if an exemption is found but it will not confirm the exemption category.

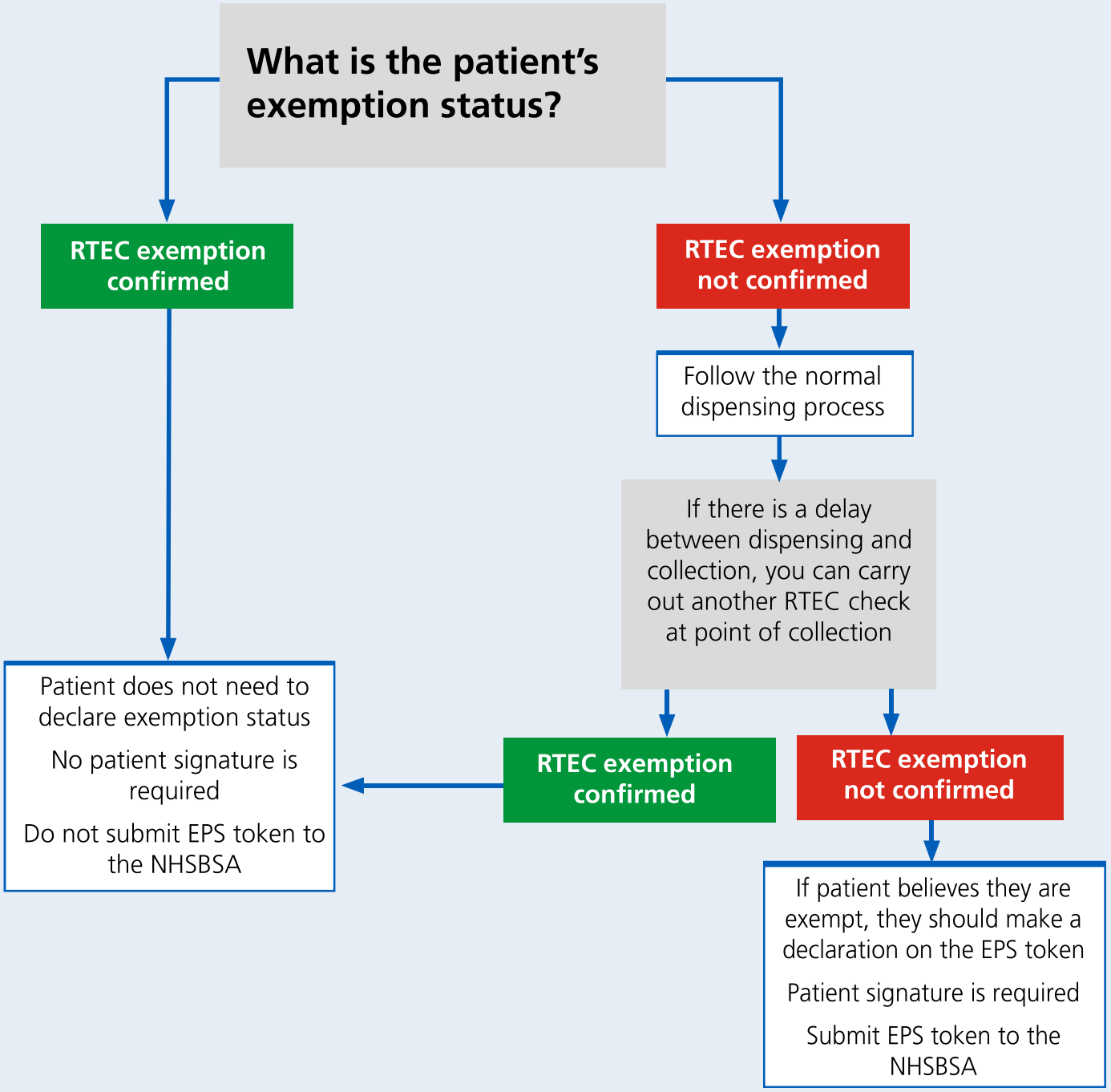
Claiming

Claim as normal. There is no need to populate exemption information for an RTEC 'confirmed' prescription. This will automatically carry through. If, for any reason, the claim is submitted and exemption information is incorrect, then recall the claim and utilise the claim amend functionality. If a patient is confirmed as exempt through RTEC, tokens do not need to be submitted to the NHS Business Services Authority (controlled drug process still applies)

If evidence is presented when RTEC has responded 'unknown'

If RTEC returns an 'unknown' and the patient can provide evidence of a valid exemption, the patient may need to update their details. It is important that the information relating to a patient's exemption held by the NHSBSA is up to date and matches the details held by their GP. If the patient needs to update their personal details held against their exemption, please advise them to contact the NHSBSA using the contact details provided at the bottom of this letter. Alternatively, patients can access ***Check if you have an exemption from paying NHS costs - NHSBSA*** OR ***Check if you can get free prescriptions - NHS*** for further information. If the patient's personal details are incorrect on their prescription, please advise them to contact their GP to update.

Process



Patients can use the online eligibility checker to find out if they can get free NHS prescriptions and help with other health costs at **www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check**

It's important that patients' details, including their name, address and date of birth, are up to date with the NHSBSA, their GP and any benefits organisations. To update their details with the NHSBSA, patients can go to **www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/contact-us** or they can call:

- 0300 330 1341 for maternity and medical certificates and Prescription Prepayment Certificates
- 0300 330 1347 for Tax Credit Exemption Certificates
- 0300 330 1343 for HC2 certificates

A telephone translation service is available if English is not their first language.

Results since the digital solution went live in 2019

127 million
checks carried year to date

78 million
exemptions confirmed