

ODS Code Journey Frequently Asked Questions

If you are opening a new pharmacy for the first time or taking over from another owner, it is vital you request an Organisational Data Services (ODS) Code, to ensure your pharmacy is set up with the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) functionality. These frequently asked questions will provide you with all the information and guidance you need to know.

What is an ODS Code?

ODS is managed by the NHS. It is a unique identifier which allows GPs and patients to nominate a Pharmacy of their choice. It enables your pharmacy to download all nominated prescriptions for their ODS code, send a Dispense Notification confirming a prescription has been collected, and a Claim Notification to request payment from the NHS for the medication dispensed. An ODS Code was previously known as a NACS, OCS, F or contractor code.

I am a new owner, how do I request and ODS Code?

A request for an ODS Code must be made by the owner who is either opening or taking over a previously owned pharmacy. The new owner must request a new code with NHS England.

Important: We recommend that you request for an ODS Code as soon as possible to prevent delays, ideally 6 – 8 weeks in advance.

I have received an ODS Code, what should I do?

Once you have received your forms to confirm that the ODS Code has been assigned to you, contact your Cegedim Customer Success Manager or Cegedim Support and advise them you have received confirmation. Cegedim will advise of the next steps including the request for Smartcard detail to move the nominations when possible.

Cegedim are not able to request a Nominations migration until the ODS Code is live and active on the NHS Portal. This usually takes between 7 and 14 days and depends on the date you received confirmation, as the NHS Portal is updated weekly. Cegedim will check the NHS Portal on a daily basis for the new ODS Code.

Please note, it is your responsibility to chase the ODS Code with the NHS.

Who makes the Code Live?

NHS Digital activate the ODS Code on the NHS Spine. This is completed once they receive the correct information from NHS England.

My ODS Code is live, what do I do now?

Once your ODS Code is live on the NHS Portal, Cegedim will request an End Point Registration (EPR). The EPR is a site identifier for the NHS Spine and allows your Pharmacy to access EPS.

If this is a new pharmacy, Cegedim will usually set up your PMR to access EPS once the EPR is approved.

Change of Ownership/Patient Nominations

If this is a change of ownership, Cegedim will request details including the Pharmacist's name and their Smartcard number, and send to NHS Digital to facilitate the migration of patient nominations from the previous owner to your ODS Code. This will ensure that patients can continue coming to the pharmacy without being impacted.

It takes a minimum of 5 working days to complete the process, so generally, we request that a Nominations migration is booked in for the week following the EPR approval.

Please note, a Nomination migration can only be requested once the new ODS Code is live in the NHS Portal. It is your responsibility to ensure that NHS England process your ODS Code request.

What if my Pharmacy has multiple Smartcards?

Only one Smartcard is required for the new ODS Code and Nominations migration. You will need to liaise with your local CCG to arrange other Smartcards to be updated with the new ODS Code.

After the Nomination migration, what do I do next?

Once the Nomination migration has taken place and been completed, which typically takes 1-2 hours from the booking time, Cegedim will contact you to make the required changes to the PMR system.

Cegedim will discuss with you what needs to be done before the changes are made, this is usually before the migration takes place. This includes ensuring that all prescriptions dispensed by the previous owner are claimed on the old ODS Code and all the prescriptions dispensed by the new owner are not claimed until the changes are made. Any part-notified prescriptions are either fully notified or fully withdrawn before the change.

Once Cegedim has made the changes, a Nominated download will be performed to test EPS functionality and ensure prescriptions flow correctly. We will then ask the Pharmacy to send a minimum of 1 Claim Notification so that the NHS views the new ODS Code as Active.

New Nominations/Surgeries unable to see the new Code

For surgeries to have the ability to nominate your new ODS code, a claim must be sent by 4 pm on Tuesday to show as Live on the following Monday. In the interim, the Pharmacy can nominate new patients through the PMR.

This does not affect patients already nominated by the Pharmacy.

Prescriptions have downloaded that I don't recognise or need?

Any prescription returned and not cancelled by the G.P. will remain on SPINE until it expires. Unfortunately, when nominations are migrated, all the prescriptions that belong to that patient are marked as "New" due to what is known as a Nominated Flag. This can sometimes lead to old/unrequired prescriptions being downloaded. These can be returned or marked as Not Dispensed depending on your preference.

I have requested my Code late and open soon, what do I do?

We are aware of how stressful and busy it is when opening/taking over a pharmacy. We have successfully migrated thousands of customers and, in some cases, at short notice. If this does happen, we will advise the best course of action, depending on the circumstances. A Cegedim Support Analyst will keep you informed and updated.