

# NEL Prescribing and Medicines Newsletter

## August 2024

### Updates for Primary Care Across North East London

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### NEL Formulary and Pathway Update

Please see table listing the drugs approved by the North East London Formulary and Pathways Group, and relevant additional information to support practices.

Approved item	Additional information
<p><b>Magnesium aspartate sachets for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Magnesium deficiency</b></li> </ul> <p>Harmonisation of formulary status across NEL</p>	<p><b>Formulary status:</b> Green</p>
<p><b>Verkazia® (ciclosporin) 1 mg/mL eye drops for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Severe vernal Keratoconjunctivitis (VKC)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Also approved for the following off-label indications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Severe Atopic Keratoconjunctivitis (AKC)</b></li> <li><b>Blepharo-keratoconjunctivitis (BKC)/ Ocular Rosacea</b></li> <li><b>Thygeson's keratitis &amp; Chronic Graft-versus-Host-Disease (GvHD)</b></li> <li><b>Dry Eye Disease (DED)/ Keratoconjunctivitis (KCS)</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Formulary status:</b> Amber- specialist initiated</p>

## MHRA Safety Alert Epimax® Ointment and Epimax® Paraffin Free Ointment: Ocular surface toxicity and ocular chemical injury

Please note that the recent Epimax® MHRA alert (see [here](#) for alert) **only** relates to Epimax® ointment and Epimax® paraffin-free ointment.

Epimax® product information states that Epimax® ointment and Epimax® paraffin-free ointment are **not for use on the face** and these items should not be prescribed or recommended for use on the face.

Patients should be advised to wash their hands thoroughly after applying Epimax® Ointment or Epimax® Paraffin-Free Ointment and avoid touching their eyes after using these products. Patients may present with pain, swelling, redness or watering of eyes, sensitivity to light, blurred vision, burning or grittiness if these two formulations of Epimax® are used on the face.

**Other Epimax® products are NOT affected by the MHRA alert.**

Epimax® original cream, Epimax Isomol® gel and Epimax® moisturising cream are also NEL first line emollient options and are unaffected by the alert.

Please see extract below from NEL Emollient Prescribing [guidelines](#) for primary care (October 2023):

### 1. Leave on Emollients

HEAVY EMOLLIENTS

→ LIGHT EMOLLIENTS

Greasy	Rich cream/ointment	Opaque gel	Light or creamy
<b>First Line:</b> Cost Effective Choices (All cost <£5/500g. Each column is listed in ascending order of cost (Drug Tariff November 2022))			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Epimax® ointment</li> <li>• EmulsifEss® emulsifying ointment (prescribe by brand)</li> <li>• White Soft Paraffin (WSP)</li> <li>• White soft paraffin 50%/Liquid paraffin 50% (50:50 ointment)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Epimax® original cream</li> <li>• AproDerm® cream</li> <li>• AproDerm® ointment</li> <li>• Hydrous ointment (prescribe as Aquaderm hydrous ointment)</li> <li>• Zeroderma® ointment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Epimax Isomol® gel</li> <li>• AproDerm® gel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Epimax® moisturising cream</li> <li>• Zero AQS emollient cream</li> <li>• Zerocream® emollient cream (contains parabens)</li> </ul>

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#### Action for practices:

Review prescribing of Epimax® ointment and Epimax® paraffin-free ointment for patients using these products on their **face** and switch to an alternative first line product in accordance with the NEL Emollient Prescribing guidelines.

The NHS offers treatment to [people with Covid-19 who are at the highest risk](#) of becoming seriously ill. NICE has recently updated guidance to extend the cohorts of patients eligible for treatment with nirmatrelvir plus ritonavir (Paxlovid®) if they test positive for Covid-19.

The guidance is available here: [Overview | Nirmatrelvir plus ritonavir, sotrovimab and tocilizumab for treating COVID-19 | Guidance | NICE](#). The introduction of these new cohorts will be phased, to manage pressures on current patient pathways.

The following groups are now eligible for referral to treatment:

- people aged 85 years and over
- people with end-stage heart failure who have a long-term ventricular assistance device
- people on the organ transplant waiting list
- people aged 70 years and over, or who have a BMI of 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more, diabetes or heart failure, and:
  - are resident in a care home, or
  - are already hospitalised.

From June 2025 this will be extended to all people who are aged 70 years and over, or who have a body mass index (BMI) of 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more or are diagnosed with diabetes or heart failure.

### Patient pathway

A community-based Covid-19 treatment service is accessible for North East London patients, provided by the NEL local COVID-19 Medicine Delivery Unit (CMDU) at Waltham Forest GP Federation.

The previous automated system which meant patients requiring Covid treatment were contacted by the NHS directly has now been turned off. Healthcare providers are now asked to either refer, or direct eligible NEL patients to self-refer, to Waltham Forest GP FedNet if they test positive for Covid-19. This referral process is the same for paediatric (12–17-year-olds) and adult patients.

### Contact details of the CMDU provider:

Waltham Forest GP FedNet

Telephone – 0203 196 3239

E-mail – [NEL.CMDUreferral@nhs.net](mailto:NEL.CMDUreferral@nhs.net)

- Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
- Saturday 9am-1pm
- Sunday and on Bank Holidays 10am-2pm

The CMDU provider will contact patients directly to confirm eligibility, discuss, and if appropriate, arrange treatment. GPs should not prescribe any COVID-19 therapies. Four community pharmacies have been contracted to dispense and if needed deliver the oral therapies to patients' homes. More information for patients can be found on the ICB website [Covid-19 treatments - NHS North East London \(icb.nhs.uk\)](#).

## Medicines Shortages Update

Medicines shortages notifications and information are available via: [SPS Medicines Supply Tool](#) ([registration](#) required to access)

The list below is not comprehensive and only highlights critical safety medication shortages.

### [Shortage of Kay-Cee-L \(potassium chloride 375mg/5ml\) \(potassium chloride 5mmol/5ml\) syrup](#)

- A National Patient Safety Alert was issued on 26 July 2024.
- Please refer to the [National Patient Safety Alert](#) for more information and advice

### [Prescribing and ordering available pancreatic enzyme replacement therapies \(PERT\)](#)

- A National Patient Safety Alert was issued on 24th May 2024
- Please refer to the [National Patient Safety Alert](#) for more information and advice.
- Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the local dietitians (e.g. CF team) if you need advice regarding the doses of alternative brands of pancreatic enzymes

OptimiseRx messages have been updated to reflect these alerts. Prescribers should work with local community pharmacy teams to ensure orders are placed within appropriate time frames as lead times to source and obtain medication may vary.

## Webinar Resources: Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) Training

The NEL Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team in conjunction with Christine Hultholm (Prescribing Support Dietitian, NELFT) delivered a series of webinars to support practice clinicians to implement recommendations made in the new NEL Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) guidelines for adults.

ONS forms part of the savings opportunities within the 2024/25 Prescribing Efficiency Scheme, which includes the requirement to utilise the cost-effective formulary recommended ONS products where clinically indicated and reduce the prescribing of non-formulary ONS products.

The recording of the ONS webinar is available here: [ONS webinar recording](#)

Presentation slides are available here: [PowerPoint Presentation \(icb.nhs.uk\)](#)

Click here for FAQ document: [ONS-FAQ-FINAL.pdf \(icb.nhs.uk\)](#)

## Reporting of Controlled Drug (CD) Incidents in Primary Care

The NHS England London Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer (CDAO) Team have identified that reporting of CD incidents from community pharmacies, GP practices and other primary care services in London is lower than in other regions.

A reminder to primary care colleagues that all CD related incidents and concerns arising in health and care settings must be reported to the NHS England London CDAO team via the Controlled Drugs Reporting Website. Incidents involving CDs from all schedules, including those from schedules 4 and 5; such as benzodiazepines, z-drugs, codeine and dihydrocodeine should be reported.

CD incidents submitted enable the London CDAO team to identify various themes to then share learning and act on preventable causes of harm.

CD incidents should be reported via the following website: <https://www.cdreporting.co.uk/>

You can find all CD Newsletters on the resources tab of the [CD Reporting Website](#).

## NEL Community Pharmacy Selfcare Advice Service (NEL CPSAS) Update

The North East London Community Pharmacy Selfcare Advice Service (NEL CPSAS) has been live since 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024.

We have received great responses and participation from community pharmacies across North East London providing this service.

83% of community pharmacies providing Pharmacy First in North East London are now able to provide the self-care service.

The ICB Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation team is working closely with Community Pharmacy North East London (LPC) and NHSE Dental, Optometry and Pharmacy team to continue to encourage remaining community pharmacies to sign up to this service.

We have now created a list of community pharmacies who *are not* providing this service and it is available on the portal, please [click here](#).

All Boots pharmacies have expressed an interest to provide this service, but status is pending. This is due to the service level agreement to be signed by the head office of Boots.

All distance-selling pharmacies who have expressed an interest also have a pending status as we are working with the NHSE colleagues on assurances for this service provision.

## Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) update

PCN and practice pharmacists may find the following upcoming webinars (1-2pm) useful.

Date	Webinar
20 <sup>th</sup> August 2024	<a href="#">Primary care discussions: Heart failure</a>

**Not registered with SPS yet?** You can register free of charge to access SPS resources via the following link:  
<https://www.sps.nhs.uk/register/>

## PrescQIPP Update

### Upcoming PrescQIPP Clinical masterclass webinars:

Clinicians may find the following monthly upcoming webinars (1-2pm) useful.

Date	Webinar
17 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	<a href="#">Antipsychotic prescribing in people with dementia</a>

View previous Clinical masterclasses webinars at <https://www.prescqipp.info/our-resources/clinical-masterclasses/>

### Recent Practice Plus webinar:

PCN pharmacists, practice pharmacists and pharmacy technicians may find the following webinar useful.

Date	Webinar
21 <sup>st</sup> August 2024 1-2pm	<a href="#">The Crucial Role of Supervision for Primary Care Pharmacy Professionals</a>

### Upcoming Virtual Professional Groups

Clinicians may find the following monthly upcoming webinars (1-2pm) useful.

Date	Webinar
18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	<a href="#">Polypharmacy and deprescribing</a>
24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	<a href="#">Pharmacy technicians</a>
25 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	<a href="#">Medication Safety</a>

### **PrescQIPP alternative to specials database**

PrescQIPP has recently released a specials database. The database provides recommendations on licenced or “off label” alternatives or if these are not suitable then which cost effective unlicensed special to prescribe. The database can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.prescqipp.info/our-resources/bulletins/bulletin-342-alternative-to-specials-database/>

**Not registered with PrescQIPP yet?** You can register free of charge to access PrescQIPP resources by [clicking here](#). Please select “ICS North East London” as the organisation.

## Contact Details and Additional Resources

### CONTACT DETAILS

NEL ICB Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team (PMOT)

For prescribing and medicines enquiries:  
[nelondonicb.prescribingqueries@nhs.net](mailto:nelondonicb.prescribingqueries@nhs.net)

For all enquires, reporting concerns or incidents relating to Controlled Drugs

[england.londonaccountableoffice@nhs.net](mailto:england.londonaccountableoffice@nhs.net)

Report CD incidents using the national reporting tool  
[www.cdreporting.co.uk](http://www.cdreporting.co.uk)

### RESOURCES

For Pharmacy & Medicines Optimisation Team Resources

<https://primarycare.northeastlondon.icb.nhs.uk/home/meds/>

For Medicine Supply Shortages

[Click here](#) for **SPS Medicines Supply Tool** which offers up-to-date information on Medicines Shortages, provided by DHSC and NHSE/I.

[Register](#) with SPS free-of-charge to access.

For PGD Updates

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) – [click here](#)  
SPS – [click here](#)  
NHS England (NHSE) – [click here](#)

#### For your information:

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