

NEL Prescribing and Medicines Newsletter

November 2024

Updates for Primary Care across North East London

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1. World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week: 18th – 24th November 2024

World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week (**WAAW**) is a global campaign which aims to increase awareness of antimicrobial resistance and to encourage best practices among the general public, health workers and policymakers, to avoid the further emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Untreatable infections affect everyone. To preserve the efficacy of these critical medicines, we need to act together. Please consider the following actions for World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week.

Actions for Practices:

- Bookmark the new location for the recently updated [North East London Primary Care Antimicrobial Infection Guideline](#), and familiarise yourselves with the recommended antibiotics, length of treatments, and additional advice when managing infections in primary care.
- Prescribe a 5-day course of Amoxicillin 500mg capsules as opposed to a 7-day course, wherever indicated, as per our primary care antimicrobial infection guidelines; more information on antibiotic duration can be found on the NHS England website [here](#).
- Consider sharing the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) TARGET '[Treating Your Infection](#)' leaflets for common infections with your patients. They are available in 25 languages and in a pictorial format.
- Visit the [UK Health Security Agency \(UKHSA\) website](#) for further information on WAAW and to access resources and toolkits that have been developed for both clinicians and patients.
- Access resources available to support with false penicillin allergy and de-labelling [Penicillin-allergy delabelling resources for clinicians practicing in resource-limited settings](#)
- **Consider registering to attend the following national online events:**
 - **Mon 18th Nov** (4-5pm) "Antibiotic-sparing strategies for recurrent UTI"
 - **Tue 19th Nov** (12:30 - 1.30pm) "Behind the scenes - driving improvements in AWaRe antibiotic use in hospitals"

- **Tue 19th Nov** (1.30pm - 2.15pm) "Blood Culture Pathway Optimisation – Translation into practice"
- **Wed 20th Nov** (2pm - 4:30pm) Launch of the ESPAUR REPORT (**UKHSA event**)
- **Thu 21st Nov** (12:30 - 1.30pm) "Recognising infection and improving antibiotic use in people with a learning disability or autism"
- **Fri 22nd Nov** (12:30 - 1:30pm) - "Launch: Resource for Prescribing Improvement Schemes Concepts"

Further details, including webinar registration links are available via this link [World AMR Awareness Week \(WAAW\) 2024 - Antimicrobial Resistance Programme - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)

2. Prescribing Efficiency Scheme 2024/25 Updates

A. Use of Tablets and Capsules in Children

Healthcare professionals and patients often assume that liquids preparations are the most suitable oral medicinal formulation for children and young people. However, switching liquids to tablets/capsules can be safer, more cost effective, more acceptable to patients and carers, and is likely to reduce the carbon footprint of prescribing.

Safety and Clinical Factors:

- Liquid doses can be more difficult to measure accurately and can be associated with more dosing errors than solid dose forms.
- Some liquid medicines are available in multiple strengths which can lead to confusion and unintentional dosing errors.
- Liquid medicines can be associated with poorer adherence due to texture and unpalatable taste.
- Some liquid medicines have a high sugar content which can lead to dental implications.

Environmental Factors:

Liquid medicines are likely to have a greater carbon footprint than solid dose forms due to:

- bulky packaging
- less doses per container
- administration with plastic syringe/spoon
- shorter shelf life
- more frequent need for refrigeration.

Cost Efficiency Factors:

- Liquid medicines are often more expensive.
- Liquid medicines are associated with more waste (e.g. shorter shelf-life, excess doses per bottle for short-term antibiotic courses).

Reference: [Why learning how to swallow pills is good for patients, parents, and the planet | The BMJ](#)

[KidzMed](#) is an e-learning resource for health care professionals on how to support children to swallow tablets/capsules.

Examples of common solid dose forms licensed for use in children

Omeprazole capsules and dispersible tablets:

- There are over 10 strengths of omeprazole liquid preparations available, leading to an increased risk for unintentional dosing errors when administering.
- Omeprazole capsules and dispersible tablets are licensed for use in children over 1 year of age.
- See [SPC Omeprazole Capsules](#) and [SPC Omeprazole Dispersible Tablets](#) for dosing and method of administration.
- See [Omeprazole information resource for patients/carers for information on how to administer omeprazole tablets/capsules to children.](#)
- **Note:** Omeprazole capsules and dispersible tablets are **not** suitable for administration via enteral feeding tube.

Cetirizine tablets:

- Licensed for use in children aged ≥ 6 years of age.
- Small tablet with score line for halving using a pill-cutter when necessary.
- See [SPC Cetirizine Hydrochloride Tablets](#) for dosing and method of administration.

B.Discontinuation of Saxagliptin/Metformin (Komboglyze®) 2.5mg/1g tablets

Komboglyze® is being discontinued by AstraZeneca on 30th November 2024, with stocks expected to be exhausted from late December 2024.

Actions for Practices:

1. Identify patients on Saxagliptin/Metformin (Komboglyze®) 2.5mg/ 1g tablets using the EMIS search provided in the [EMIS Searches](#) folder on the GP portal.
2. Prescribers should clinically review identified patients and consider switching to Sitagliptin 50 mg plus Metformin 1g, either as a combined preparation or as separate preparations.
3. Prescribers should counsel patients on any changes to their prescribed regime and confirm the quantity of tablets to be taken per dose.

Please see [SPS - Discontinuation of Saxagliptin / Metformin \(Komboglyze\) 2.5mg/ 1g tablets](#) for further information

3. North East London Community Pharmacy Oral Contraception Service Webinar for Primary Care

The nationally commissioned Community Pharmacy Oral Contraception service will be launching in North East London on 25th November 2024.

This service allows community pharmacists to initiate oral contraception via patient group direction (PGD), as well as to provide ongoing monitoring and supply of repeat oral contraception that was initiated in: general practice, community pharmacy or a sexual health clinic (or equivalent).

Currently we have over 80% of community pharmacies in NEL signed up to provide this service and the number is anticipated to increase.

This webinar will provide general practices with more information on the service, including:

- patient eligibility criteria
- how to refer patients for this service
- benefits of the service to practices in NEL.

The availability of this service in NEL will improve patients' access to oral contraception services and enable extra capacity in primary care to support delivery of more complex assessments.

Details of the webinar below:

- Date: **27th November 2024**
- Time: **13:00 – 14:00**
- Register: [HERE](#)

The webinar will be of particular benefit to GPs, Practices Nurses, PCN/Practice Pharmacists, Healthcare Assistants and Practice Managers.

Please contact the NEL ICB Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team, if you have any questions regarding the webinar or the service, via nelondonicb.medicinesoptimisationenquiries@nhs.net

4. Formulary and Pathways Update

North East London (NEL) electronic Joint Formulary (netFormulary®) is now LIVE!

The recently launched NEL Joint Formulary can be accessed via: www.nel-jointformulary.nhs.uk

A NEL netFormulary® user guide is available [here](#).

For any chapters not currently uploaded, you will be able to access the legacy formularies via netFormulary® during this transition period.

Formulary and Guideline Updates

Please see table below listing the drugs and guideline updates approved by the NEL Formulary and Pathways Group, including any relevant additional information to support practices.

Approved item	Additional information
Cytisine® for smoking cessation	Formulary status: Amber , Specialist initiation or specialist recommendation – in accordance with local smoking cessation services.
Relugolix® for treating hormone-sensitive prostate cancer	Formulary status: Amber , specialist initiation Overview Relugolix for treating hormone-sensitive prostate cancer Guidance NICE

5-fluorouracil (5-FU) cream for treatment of anogenital intraepithelial neoplasia	Formulary status: Red , hospital only prescribing
NICE TA991 Abaloparatide for treating osteoporosis after menopause	Formulary status: Red , hospital only prescribing Overview Abaloparatide for treating osteoporosis after menopause Guidance NICE
NICE TA996 Linzagolix for treating moderate to severe symptoms of uterine fibroids	Formulary status: Red , hospital only prescribing Overview Linzagolix for treating moderate to severe symptoms of uterine fibroids Guidance NICE

5. The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) Repeat Prescribing Toolkit 2024

The RCGP and RPS have developed a Repeat Prescribing Toolkit to support collaborative, safe and efficient processes for repeat prescribing. The toolkit was commissioned by NHS England following the recommendations from the 2021 National Overprescribing Review, which recognises the impact that poorly operated repeat prescribing systems can have on overprescribing and problematic polypharmacy.

By supporting the streamlining of repeat prescribing systems, the toolkit aims to improve patient care, prevent potential oversupply, whilst reducing unnecessary medicines waste and saving NHS resources. It includes practical guidance on improving communication with patients about repeat prescribing supported by good practice case studies, flow charts, action plan templates, and other useful resources.

The case studies shared in the toolkit demonstrate best practice in specific areas; include reducing waste and improving environmental sustainability; reducing workload by utilising digital capability and supporting vulnerable patient groups.

The toolkit takes the form of a self-assessment process. This will facilitate GP practice teams and primary care networks to work in collaboration with community pharmacies and patients and evaluate their local arrangements against a framework to identify areas for safety and efficiency improvements.

A PDF version of the Repeat Prescribing Toolkit can be downloaded at: [Repeat Prescribing Toolkit](#)

6. A Quality Improvement Project undertaken in North East London showcased at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) Annual Conference 2024!

A poster presentation, showcasing a Quality Improvement (QI) project undertaken in a North East London PCN, on the 'Deprescribing & Monitoring of Oral Ferrous medication in Iron-Deficiency Anaemia' was displayed at the RPS Annual Conference 2024 'Working across boundaries - embracing new opportunities and empowering excellence' event.

Dawn Ovonlen, a Pharmacy Technician working for Stratford PCN, created a population reporting search on EMIS Web, for patients who are prescribed oral ferrous preparations, after consulting with the Eclipse Live system team and the Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) to confirm the prescribing and monitoring criteria. The PCN had sought to clarify the dosing advice for Ferrous Sulfate as information published on Electronic Medicines Compendium for Ferrous Sulfate tablets, which stated 'BD' dosing, whereas the latest NICE guidance stated up to 1 OD dosing.

Information was shared with prescribing clinicians and practices within the PCN, referring them to NICE CKS on Iron Deficiency Anaemia and the STOPP criteria, which states 'oral doses greater than 200mg elemental iron daily have no evidence of enhanced iron absorption'.

As a result of this QI project, the following improvements were made:

- Improvement in patient compliance and quality of life by reducing the dose of oral ferrous preparations taken, in addition to:
- Improvement in levels of fatigue of patients
- Reduction in gastro-intestinal adverse effects
- More routine monitoring of required blood tests

The project also encouraged:

- Dietary advice to patients.
- Recommendation to purchase over-the-counter purchases of ferrous preparation for mild cases of iron deficiency anaemia where appropriate.
- FIT tests provision for patients aged over 60 years with any anaemia type to rule out underlying cancer.
- Appropriate referrals to specialists, e.g. the Haematology Clinic, for consideration of iron transfusions in cases of where no improvement in serum iron levels after oral treatment.

Detailed information regarding this project can be found on the PrescQIPP webpage [linked here](#), with an option to download the full project pack.

Well done to Dawn for leading this project and the Stratford PCN directors Manuel Antony, Dr Subir Sen and Dr Vaishali Ashar, all the clinicians at Newham Transitional Practice, Abbey Road Medical Practice and Vicarage Lane Surgery who participated in the project. Thank you Dawn for sharing this work with colleagues across NEL.

If other PCNs in North East London are interested in this work and would like further information, please contact Dawn Ovonlen at the following email address: d.ovonlen@nhs.net

We encourage other PCN / general practice pharmacy technicians and pharmacists and community pharmacists who have similarly undertaken prescribing and medicines projects to share these with colleagues across NEL. Please drop us an email via nelondonicb.medicinesoptimisationenquiries@nhs.net, with details of your project and we can support sharing your successes.

7. PrescQIPP Update

Clinical Masterclass – Upcoming webinars:

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

Date	Webinar
10 th December 2024	NICE/BTS guideline on Asthma: diagnosis, monitoring and chronic asthma management
29 th January 2025	NICE Guideline on Menopause; diagnosis and management
25 th February 2025	The GP Evidence website: user-friendly clinical evidence to support shared decision making about treatments for long-term conditions

View recordings and slides from previous webinars: <https://www.prescqipp.info/our-resources/clinical-masterclasses/>

Practice Plus webinar recordings:

PCN pharmacists, practice pharmacists and pharmacy technicians may find the following past webinar recording useful:

Date	Webinar
16 th October 2024	Demystifying Research in Primary Care

View previous webinars: <https://www.prescqipp.info/learning/practice-plus/>

Prescribing Mastery – Upcoming webinars

These webinar sessions support pharmacist prescribers in general practice and offer action learning opportunities where attendees can bring cases along to share. Clinicians may find the following webinars (1-2pm) useful.

Date	Webinar
20 th November 2024	Severe mental illness session 1: Unlocking excellence – Mastering Severe Mental Illness for our patients
11 th December 2024	Severe mental illness session 2: Reflecting on mastering severe mental illness - what went well, what was difficult, what could you do differently?

PrescQIPP Podcast – Talking Meds

The PrescQIPP 'Talking Meds' podcast is hosted by Jonathan Underhill (former Medicines Clinical Adviser at NICE) with episodes released bi-monthly. Episode 1, 2 and 3 are out now.

- Episode 1 features Magnus Hird, a pioneer of clinical pharmacists working in general practice, to discuss his role, how he prioritises people for a medication review as well as safety issues.
- Episode 2 features Lucy Pollock, a consultant geriatrician, to discuss sensible prescribing in older people as part of a series of episodes on this topic, with discussions on prescribing cascades in this episode.
- Episode 3 features Mark Horowitz, a consultant psychiatrist and co-author of the Maudsley Deprescribing Guidelines, to discuss safely stopping antidepressants.

Future podcast episodes will include:

- The new Repeat Prescribing Toolkit for RPS/RCGP with Clare Howard.
- New NICE Menopause guideline with NICE committee member Hayley Berry.
- Penicillin allergy de-labelling with Phil Howard OBE.
- Topics such as the NICE/SIGN Asthma guideline, insomnia and more episodes of sensible prescribing in older people.

You can subscribe to the Talking Meds podcast via the following platforms:

- [iTunes/Apple podcasts](#)
- [Spotify](#)

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.

8. Contact Details and Additional Resources

CONTACT DETAILS

NEL ICB Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team

For prescribing and medicines enquiries:
nelondonicb.prescribingqueries@nhs.net

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

england.londonaccountableoffice@nhs.net
Report CD incidents using the national reporting tool
www.cdreporting.co.uk

RESOURCES

For NEL electronic Joint Formulary (netFormulary®)

www.nel-jointformulary.nhs.uk

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 Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs)

[Click here](#) for SSPs and supporting guidance.

For PGD Updates

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

For your information:

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