

NEL Prescribing and Medicines Newsletter

December 2024

Updates for Primary Care across North East London

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1. Launch of the NEL Community Pharmacy Contraception Service

The Community Pharmacy Oral Contraception Service was officially launched in NEL on 27th November 2024.

The oral contraception service enables patients to have a confidential consultation with a community pharmacist to be:

1. Initiated on oral contraception or to be
2. Provided a continued supply of their oral contraception (that has been initiated in primary care, pharmacy and sexual health clinics or equivalent).

Pharmacies who provide this service will be auto populated on Local Services on EMIS (when made available), with pharmacies listed by proximity to the selected patient's home.

Please ensure:

- you obtain the patient's consent prior to making a referral and
- the choice of pharmacies where you send patient referrals to, **are as per individual patient's choice.**

Pharmacies will contact the patient directly within 48-72hours of receiving a referral, to agree an appointment for the consultation.

All referred patients will be assessed by community pharmacists in line with national guidelines e.g. NICE, FSRH and supply of the oral contraception will be in accordance with the national patient group directions (PGDs) for this service and the [NEL oral contraceptives formulary](#).

The pharmacies who provide this service can only provide oral formulations of contraception, and not any other types such as patches, injectable and intrauterine devices. Patients who require non-oral formulations of contraception are not eligible for this service.

Other exclusions for the service include patients who are under 16 years old and assessed as not competent according to Fraser guidelines; those aged over 16 years and assessed as lacking capacity to consent.

Please refer to the individual patient group directions (PGD) for the full exclusion criteria for this service:

- [PGD for the supply of a combined oral hormonal contraceptive \(COC\) by Community Pharmacists in England working in a pharmacy registered to provide the NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service.](#)
- [PGD for the supply of a progestogen only contraceptive pill \(POP\) by Community Pharmacists in England working in a pharmacy registered to provide the NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service.](#)

Further resources available below:

- **NEL Community Pharmacy Oral Contraception Service Webinar – for GP Practices (27th November 2024)**
 - Presentation slides: <https://primarycare.northeastlondon.icb.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/NEL-Community-Pharmacy-Oral-Contraception-Webinar-Training-Primary-Care-FINAL.pdf>
 - Recording: <https://neltraininghub.org/resources/webinar-recordings/#toggle-id->
- [Community Pharmacy advanced service specification – NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service](#)

UPDATE: We have been made aware that the referral function for the oral contraception service is temporarily unavailable on Local Services on EMIS.

Whilst we are in contact with EMIS Health to address this issue urgently, please continue to prescribe oral contraceptives for your patients as an interim measure.

Further updates will be communicated to practices via email.

2. Community Pharmacy Upcoming Holiday Opening Hours

Prior to the upcoming 2024/25 festive period, clinicians can find the opening hours for community pharmacies in North East London which have been asked to open on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day by accessing the following document: <https://primarycare.northeastlondon.icb.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/NEL-Pharmacy-rota-Christmas-New-Year-Bank-Holiday-Opening-24-25.pdf>

There will be additional community pharmacies opening voluntarily on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day that are not listed in the document linked above. In addition, there will be some community pharmacies that may be closed or closing early on Tuesday 24th December 2024 and Tuesday 31st December 2024.

Clinicians can check the upcoming holiday opening hours of a community pharmacy by searching at www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-pharmacy or by contacting NHS 111.

3. Community Pharmacies Commissioned to Provide End of Life Care (EoLC) Medicines – Upcoming Holiday Opening Hours

A reminder to all clinicians working in primary care that North East London (NEL) ICB has commissioned a designated number of community pharmacies to maintain a stock of commonly used End of Life Care (EoLC) medicines to ensure timely access to these medicines across NEL.

During the upcoming public holidays, there are six commissioned community pharmacies which will be open, however they will be operating at revised opening hours on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Information on the revised opening hours for the six commissioned community pharmacies that will be open on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day is provided in the table below.

Please be informed that during the Bank Holiday period, the out-of-hours service provision for EoLC medicines remains unchanged.

The following [link](#) hosted on the NEL Primary Care Portal provides information on the following:

- A list of the NEL commissioned pharmacies who provide EoLC medicines, including their contact details.
- Information on the EoLC medicines that the NEL commissioned pharmacies hold stock of.
- Guidance on accessing out-of-hours services and the commissioned pharmacies that provide this service.

Commissioned Community Pharmacy	Christmas Day opening times	Boxing Day opening times	New Year's Day opening times
Regal Pharmacy (48-50 Chatsworth Road, Upper Clapton, E5 0LP) Telephone: 020 8985 2536	10:00-18:00	10:00-14:00	10:00-14:00
Woodgrange Pharmacy (116 Woodgrange Road, Forest Gate, E7 0EW) Telephone: 020 8555 5660	10:00-18:00	10:00-18:00	10:00-18:00
Forward Pharmacy (648 Mile End Road, London, E3 4LH) Telephone: 020 8980 1231	10:00-18:00	10:00-18:00	10:00-18:00
Fairlop Pharmacy (87 High Street, Barkingside, Ilford, IG6 2AH) Telephone: 020 8551 3017	12:00-23:59	12:00-23:59	12:00-23:59
Gold's Pharmacy Gants Hill (24 Seven Ways Parade, Woodford Avenue, Gants Hill, Ilford, IG2 6JX) Telephone: 020 8550 1050	09:30-22:00	09:30-22:00	09:30-22:00
Beehive Pharmacy (8 Beehive Lane, Gants Hill, Ilford, IG1 3RD) Telephone: 020 8554 3560	09:00-17:00	09:00-17:00	Closed
Britannia Pharmacy (Barking Community Hospital, Upney Lane, Barking IG11 9LX) Telephone: 020 8594 2686	10:00-18:00	11:00-15:00	11:00-15:00

4. Prescribing Efficiency Scheme 2024/25 Updates

A. Metformin Monotherapy and Self-Monitoring of Blood Glucose

In the October 2024 edition of NEL Prescribing and Medicines Newsletter, the North East London (NEL) Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team reported that nationally, NEL is the second highest prescriber of blood glucose testing strips (BGTS) in patients with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) who are prescribed metformin monotherapy. Self-monitoring of blood glucose is not routinely necessary for non-pregnant T2DM patients who are diet-controlled or treated with metformin monotherapy as per [NICE Guideline \[NG28\] Type 2 diabetes management in adults](#).

The NEL Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team has produced a [NEL BGTS dashboard](#) which highlights the number of patients with T2DM who are diet-controlled or treated with metformin monotherapy and prescribed BGTS at GP practices within NEL. Clinicians can undertake the following steps to identify the number of patients at their GP practice:

- Open [NEL BGTS Dashboard](#)
- Select the tab labelled: “Oversupply BGTS”
- Using the filter at the top of the page, select “Group 1”
- Use the filter to select your GP practice and view the number of T2DM patients who are currently diet-controlled or treated with metformin monotherapy and are prescribed BGTS.

The Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation team have added new searches to [Clinical System Searches](#) on the NEL Primary Care Portal to assist with identifying these patients for a review.

Action for GP Practices:

1. Use the new EMIS searches to identify patients with T2DM who are diet-controlled or treated with metformin monotherapy and prescribed BGTS. Where there is no indication for BGTS, then deprescribe. Stopping BGTS in these patients will also help GP practices work towards achieving their 2024/25 cost improvement plan (CIP) target.
2. For patients with T2DM who are diet controlled or treated with metformin monotherapy and have gestational diabetes/are pregnant, then review the ongoing need for BGTS and quantities prescribed as per [NICE Guideline: Diabetes in Pregnancy](#)
3. Move BGTS from repeat to acute prescriptions for patients who only need to test intermittently.
4. Ensure BGTS are only prescribed for patients with demonstrated clinical need in line with [NEL Blood glucose test strips guideline](#)

B. Prescribing Efficiency Scheme – EMIS Search for Emollients

Following feedback from GP practices, we have reviewed the Prescribing Efficiency Scheme EMIS search for Emollients. The updated search is available in the [Clinical System Searches](#) folder on the NEL Primary Care Portal.

C. Prescribing Efficiency Scheme 2024/25 Feedback and Query Online Forms

The NEL Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team have produced a Frequency Asked Questions (FAQs) sheet, and online forms that GP practice clinicians and staff can complete in order to support with queries and feedback in relation to the scheme. The feedback received from GP practices will help support the development of future schemes and practice support. The FAQs sheet and forms are available for practices to complete on the NEL Primary Care Portal, with links to the forms below:

- [Prescribing Efficiency Scheme FAQs](#)
- [Prescribing Efficiency Scheme Queries](#)
- [Prescribing Efficiency Scheme 24/25 Feedback Form](#)
- [Practice Identified New Prescribing Efficiency Opportunities](#)
- [PES ICB Practice Team Feedback Form](#)
- [Third Party \(MORPh or Interface\) Feedback Form](#)

5. 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 recently approved by the NEL Formulary and Pathways Group, including any relevant additional information to support practices.

Approved item	Additional information
Formulary addition: Riluzole orodispersible films approved for treating adult patients with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)	Formulary status: Purple (Shared Care)
Approved guideline: NEL Paediatric Respiratory Inhaler Formulary – November 2024	Medicines Guidelines- Respiratory – North East London

6. Primary Care Updates from NHS England

Clinicians may find the following updates from NHS England for primary care useful.

A. Influenza season 2024/25 – Use of antiviral medicines

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) surveillance data indicates that influenza is circulating in the community. While some areas continue to see low levels of influenza activity, surveillance indicators show that activity is increasing in all levels of care and activity is expected to increase further over the coming weeks. The most notable changes have been a significant increase in influenza positivity through laboratory surveillance and an increase in acute respiratory infection outbreaks with a marked increase in those with influenza reported, principally in care homes.

Prescribers working in primary care may now prescribe, and community pharmacists may now supply antiviral medicines (oseltamivir and zanamivir) for the prophylaxis and treatment of influenza at NHS expense. This is in accordance with NICE guidance, and Schedule 2 to the National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts (Prescription of drugs etc) Regulations 2004), commonly known as the Grey List or Selected List Scheme (SLS).

Antiviral medicines may be prescribed for patients in clinical at-risk groups as well as anyone at risk of severe illness and/or complications from influenza if not treated.

The Chief Medical Officer and Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for England have written to health professionals through the [Central Alerting System \(CAS\)](#), to authorise NHS prescribing of antivirals in primary care and dispensing through community pharmacy from 3rd December 2024.

B. Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) Prescribing Webinar

The National Women's Health Programme is hosting a webinar on Tuesday 17 December 2024, 11am-12pm to share the findings of the [Inequalities in HRT Prescribing Report](#), published by NHS Business Service Authority (BSA) on 18 October 2024.

This webinar is intended to be an interactive learning opportunity for attendees. It will be chaired by Dr Sue Mann, National Clinical Director for Women's Health. Clinicians can sign up to the webinar using the following link [Inequalities in Hormone Replacement Therapy Prescribing as a treatment for menopause | NHS England Events](#).

7. PrescQIPP Update

PrescQIPP Bulletins:

Clinicians may find the following, recently published PrescQIPP bulletins useful:

- [Bulletin 352: Insomnia](#)
- [Bulletin 353: Dependence forming medicines](#)
- [Bulletin 354: Lancets](#)
- [Bulletin 361: Medicines without harm](#)
- [Bulletin 229: Insulin pen needles](#)

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 recordings useful:

Date	Webinar
28 th November 2024	PrescQIPP Team Session on Heart Failure
12 th December 2024	The Rise of the Primary Care Pharmacy Technician

Register to join the Practice Plus group, and 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
14 th January 2025	Mastering Structured Medication Reviews – How do you optimise the opportunities to review patients through SMR? What tools can you use to strategically identify those patients that will get the most of the review?
30 th January 2025	Reflecting on Structured Medication Reviews – what went well, what was difficult, what could you do differently?

Virtual Professional Groups

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

Date	Webinar
18 th December 2024	Polypharmacy and deprescribing
19 th December 2024	Pharmacy technicians
6 th January 2025	Medication safety
8 th January 2025	High cost drugs and biosimilars
15 th January 2025	Care homes
28 th January 2025	Nutrition

Social Prescribing webinars

PrescQIPP have worked with the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) to develop a series of webinars to raise awareness of social prescribing among pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

Attendees who complete all seven webinars (whether participating in the live events or having watched the recordings), will be awarded 'Social Prescribing Champion' status as part of the [NASP clinical champion programme](#). Clinicians can watch recordings of the previous webinars by [clicking here](#), and can register to attend the upcoming webinars by clicking on the links in the table below.

Date	Webinar
7 th January 2025	Social Prescribing for Major Conditions (2)
12 th February 2025	What does a “social prescription” look like?
11 th March 2025	How can pharmacy professionals support patients by the use of social prescribing?

PrescQIPP Podcast – ‘Talking Meds’

The ‘Talking Meds’ podcast is hosted by Jonathan Underhill (former Medicines Clinical Adviser at NICE) with episodes released bi-monthly. Episodes 1 to 6 are out now.

- Episode 4 features Lucy Pollock, a consultant geriatrician, to continue a discussion on **sensible prescribing in older people**, as part of a series of episodes on this topic.
- Episode 5 features Clare Howard, Clinical Lead for Medicines Optimisation at Health Innovation Wessex, to discuss the **development of the Repeat Prescribing Toolkit** by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and Royal College of General Practitioners that she had contributed to.
- Episode 6 features Lucy Pollock, to continue discussions on **sensible prescribing in older people**, as part of a series of episodes on this topic. In this episode, Jonathan and Lucy talk about the identification and sensible management of heart failure with preserved ejection fraction.

Clinicians can find out more about the guests and the topics discussed in Episodes 1, 2 and 3 at the following link: [PrescQIPP Podcast](#).

Future podcast episodes will include:

- 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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