

NEL Prescribing and Medicines Newsletter

April 2025

Updates for Primary Care across North East London

Contents

1. NHS North East London Prescribing Quality Scheme (PQS) 2025/26	1
2. NEL Prescribing Quality and Efficiency Scheme: Drop-in Q&A sessions	2
3. New Medicine Safety Section now live on the Primary Care Portal	2
4. MHRA Latest Drugs Safety Update	3
5. Change of FreeStyle Libre 2 to FreeStyle Libre 2 Plus and Dexcom ONE to Dexcom ONE+	5
6. NEL Pharmacy Primary Care Network & General Practice Communities of Practice Meeting Webinar	6
7. Antimicrobial Resistance and Stewardship Learning Event	6
8. Community Pharmacies Commissioned to Provide End-of-Life Care Medicines Service May Bank Holiday Opening Hours	7
9. Contact Details and Additional Resources	7

1. NHS North East London Prescribing Quality Scheme (PQS) 2025/26

We are pleased to confirm that the NHS North East London [Prescribing Quality Scheme \(PQS\) 2025/2026](#) was launched in March 2025.

The scheme runs across all 7 places in NEL. This scheme is focused on prescribing quality and will run alongside the Prescribing Efficiency Scheme (PES) which will be released in due course.

Practices will be automatically enrolled in this PQS. However, if a practice should choose to opt-out of this elective scheme (and the payment associated with it), please notify your NEL ICB Senior Medicines Optimisation pharmacist via nelondonicb.prescribingqueries@nhs.net

The PQS scheme will run for 18 months from **March 2025 until 30th September 2026**. The scheme is worth 25p per registered patient.

The video of the virtual launch of the 2025/26 PQS is available to view: [NEL 2025/2026 PQS Scheme Presentation](#).

The rationale for the scheme, resources and tools to support the scheme are also available [via this link](#).

The [CoordinateRx dashboard](#) for the PQS indicators is now live. Practices should utilise their existing logins to access the dashboard.

If you have queries relating to PQS, please contact the NEL Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team on nelondonicb.prescribingqueries@nhs.net

2. Drop-In Q&A Sessions: NEL Prescribing Quality and Efficiency Scheme

Drop-in Q&A Sessions

Following the launch of the NEL Prescribing Quality Scheme (PQS) in March, the NEL 25/26 Prescribing Efficiency Scheme (PES) is due to be launched at the end of April with a pre-recorded webinar to explain the scheme details.

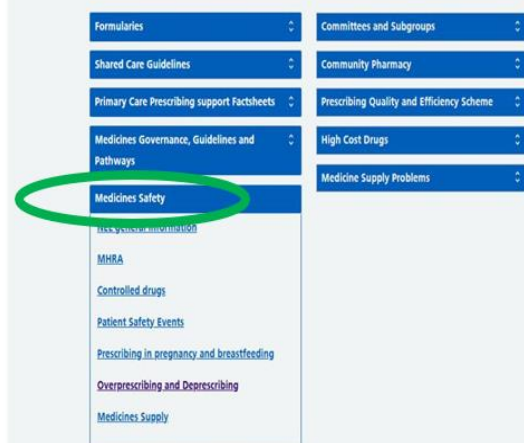
To help facilitate questions and queries relating to both the PQS and PES, the NEL Medicines Optimisation Team will be hosting regular drop-in Q&A sessions throughout the year. All practices are welcome and encouraged to attend. This will also be an opportunity to provide feedback on both schemes as well as ask any questions relating to the schemes.

The first drop-in Q&A session will be held on **Tuesday 20th May 2025 at 12:30-2pm**. Links to the sessions will be distributed prior to each event.

Subsequent sessions are scheduled for:

Date	Time
Tuesday 8 th July 2025	1-2pm
Tuesday 23 rd September 2025	1-2pm
Tuesday 25 th November 2025	1-2pm
Tuesday 20 th January 2026	1-2pm

3. New Medicines Safety Section Now Live on the Primary Care Portal



We are delighted to announce the launch of a dedicated *Medicines Safety* section on the North East London (NEL) Primary Care Portal [Medicines Optimisation webpage](#).

This new resource provides up-to-date guidance notes on safer prescribing of high-risk medicines, medicines safety alerts, shared learning from medicine incidents, and tools to support safe prescribing and medicines use across primary care. It aims to be your one stop shop for medicines safety updates in primary care.




Please email nelondonicb.prescribingqueries@nhs.net to let us know what you find useful or suggest any additions or improvements to the *Medicines Safety* section.

This Month's Medicines Safety Highlights

Guidance on shared care agreements with unregulated providers for children and young people with gender incongruence

On 11th December 2024, the government passed legislation that made restrictions on the use of puberty suppressing hormones for children and young people under 18 years permanent when used for gender incongruence or gender dysphoria. NHS England has now issued advice to General Practitioners on how to respond to requests that are made by unregulated providers for a shared care approach to the prescribing, administration and monitoring of hormone interventions as a treatment option for gender incongruence or gender dysphoria. This guidance can be accessed [here](#).

Check out the latest additions to the *Medicines Safety* section on the NEL Primary Care Portal [Medicines Optimisation webpage](#), starting with a focus on safer prescribing of valproate and topiramate:

-  **Valproate Safer Prescribing, including use in Men – Updated Guidance Note (Jan 2025):**
Now includes updated MHRA safety measures and essential best practice advice for prescribers and includes additional patient resources to manage risks in men and boys of reproductive potential. For more information, click [here](#).
 -  **Valproate Safety Webinar Slides (April 2025):**
Catch up on recent safety updates from the MHRA, launch of our EMIS and SystmOne 'Valproate Monitoring NEL' templates and practical insights from our recent webinar [slides](#).
- Get an exclusive look at our upcoming Valproate Dashboard – designed to support local monitoring and to support safer prescribing. Stay tuned for more details!
-  **Topiramate – Updated Guidance Note (July 2024):**
Highlights recent changes to safety regulations for women and girls of childbearing potential. For more information, click [here](#).

Check out the [new](#) *Patient Safety* section on the [Portal](#) for more information and initiatives to support safer practice.

Get Involved: Be a Pioneer for Patient Safety in General Practice!

NHSE is looking for primary care professionals to take part in testing the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF) in general practice as part of the new [Primary Care Patient Safety Strategy](#). The focus is on building a positive safety culture, improving systems for learning from incidents, and involving staff and patients in making care safer.

If you are interested in joining the second year of the pilot, visit the [Portal](#) to learn more and express your interest [here](#).

Patient safety data release for incidents recorded on Learning from Patient Safety Events (LFPSE)

The first official patient safety statistics release of LFPSE data has been published and can be accessed by the following link: [Patient Safety Incident Data Quarterly Publication for Q3 2024/25](#).

4. MHRA Latest Drug Safety Updates

National Colistin (Colistimethate) supply shortage (updated)

In last month's newsletter, we provided an update on the management of Colistin (Colistimethate) supply shortages. Please note [Colomycin® unit powder for solution for injection, infusion or inhalation vials 1 million units and 2 million units \(MU\) preparations](#) supply shortage continues. The actions for General Practices in the [March newsletter](#) still apply.

Please see **updated supply distribution** details for the three brands of Colistin (Colistimethate) below:

Brand	Strength	Routes for administration	Current supply distribution
-------	----------	---------------------------	-----------------------------

Colomycin®	1 and 2 MU	Injection, infusion and nebulisation	Limited supply until early May and w/c 14 April 2025 respectively and unable to support an increase in demand until these dates.
Promixin®	1 MU	Nebulisation via the I-Neb device only	Discontinued from early May 2025 and unavailable to support Colomycin® brand shortage. See recent National Patient Safety Alert
Colicym®	1 MU	Nebulisation	Limited supply, next supply anticipated resupply is in October 2025.

For updates on stock availability and information on alternative brands products, please refer to the Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) [Medicines Supply Tool](#) and the [Electronic Medicines Compendium](#) (EMC).

MHRA Drug Safety Updates

A Drug Safety Update was published on 10th April 2025 to advise that [Fezolinetant \(Veoza®\) treatment is associated with a risk of drug induced liver disease](#). This was generally reversible on discontinuation of therapy. This medication is currently non-formulary in NEL, however PrescQIPP data shows that there has been some recent prescribing activity.

Summary of advice for General Practices:

- Please refrain from initiating new patients on fezolinetant.
- Avoid fezolinetant in patients with known liver disease or patients at higher risk for liver disease.
- Where you are currently prescribing fezolinetant, please monitor patients' liver function as follows:
 - Test liver function including ALT, AST, ALP, and serum bilirubin (total and direct) before starting.
 - Do **not** start treatment if ALT, AST, or total bilirubin is $\geq 2\times$ the upper limit of normal (ULN).
 - Monitor liver function monthly for the first 3 months, then as clinically needed.
 - Re-test if liver injury symptoms arise and continue monitoring until results normalise.
 - Discontinue treatment if: (i) transaminases $\geq 3\times$ ULN with total bilirubin $>2\times$ ULN or if patients develop symptoms of liver injury (ii) transaminases $>5\times$ ULN.
- Advise patients to seek immediate medical help if symptoms like fatigue, itching, jaundice, dark urine, pale stools, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, or abdominal pain occur.
- Report suspected adverse effects through the [Yellow Card Scheme](#).
- Please refer to the [Drug Safety Update](#) for further information.

National Medication Shortages

Please note there are national shortages of:

- Estradiol (Estradot®) 25micrograms/24 hours, 37.5micrograms/24 hours, 50micrograms/24 hours, 75micrograms/24 hours, and 100micrograms/24 hours transdermal patches. Advice on alternatives and details of supply disruption can be found [here](#).
- Galantamine 8mg, 16mg and 24mg modified-release capsules. Advice on alternatives and details of supply disruption can be found [here](#).
- Fentanyl (Durogesic® DTrans®) 12micrograms/hour, 25micrograms/hour, 50micrograms/hour, 75micrograms/hour, and 100micrograms/hour patches. Advice on alternatives and details of supply disruption can be found [here](#).

Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs)

[SSPs](#) for Estradot® 25 microgram, 50 microgram, 75 microgram and 100 microgram patches are valid until 2 May 2025 (subject to change).

All active SSPs can be accessed here: [Serious shortage protocols \(SSPs\) | NHSBSA](#).

Further information on medicines safety

Please consult the following for further information on alerts, recalls and medicines safety information:

- [MHRA Drug Safety Updates](#)
- [SPS Medication Safety Update](#)
- [MHRA Alerts, recalls and safety information: medicines and medical device](#)

5. Change of FreeStyle Libre 2 to FreeStyle Libre 2 Plus® and Dexcom ONE to Dexcom ONE+®

FreeStyle Libre 2®

- FreeStyle Libre 2® sensors are being phased out in the UK from August 2025 and will be replaced by FreeStyle Libre 2 Plus®.
- There is no price difference between FreeStyle Libre 2® and FreeStyle Libre 2 Plus®.
- The new sensors will fit into the same reader and the phone app remains the same, therefore these do not require changing. The sensors are compatible for patients on insulin pump therapy using the Omnipod 5® in a Hybrid Closed Loop System.

Key Differences:

	FreeStyle Libre 2®	FreeStyle Libre 2 PLUS®
Maximum Wear Duration	14 days	15 days
Indicated Age	4 years and older	2 years and older

- Please visit the FreeStyle Abbott website for further product information: [linked here](#).

Dexcom ONE®

- The Dexcom ONE® device will be discontinued as of 1st May 2025, and will be replaced by Dexcom ONE+®.
- There is no price difference between Dexcom ONE® and Dexcom ONE+®.

Key differences:

	Dexcom ONE®	Dexcom ONE+®
Sensor Size	Larger sensor	Smaller sensor
Transmitter	Requires a separate transmitter	All-in-one device (no separate transmitter)
App	Dexcom ONE®*	Dexcom ONE+®* (available on Google Play and App Store)
Warm-up Time	2 hours	30 minutes - It will now only take 30 minutes from the time of inserting the sensor before obtaining the first reading.
Sensor Session Grace Period	No grace period	12 hours grace period between sensor sessions

Sensor Session Duration	Up to 10 days	Up to 10 days
--------------------------------	---------------	---------------



- If a patient is transitioning from a previous Dexcom Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) device, they can continue using their existing username and password across all Dexcom apps without needing to create a new account. For more information on compatibility please visit: [Dexcom ONE + FAQs](#) and patient information [Dexcom ONE® to Dexcom ONE® transition guide](#)
- Please visit the Dexcom website for further product information: [linked here](#)

Actions for General Practices for both devices:

- Clinicians should not initiate FreeStyle Libre 2® and/or Dexcom ONE® for **new** patients and should discontinue prescribing FreeStyle Libre 2® and Dexcom ONE® sensors.
- Prescribers are recommended to prescribe the **FreeStyle Libre 2 Plus® and Dexcom ONE+®** sensors.
- Conduct an EMIS or SystmOne search to identify patients who are prescribed FreeStyle Libre 2® and Dexcom ONE®, and ensure they are removed from patient's repeat medication list.
- Inform patients about the discontinuation, replacement product and explain the impact on their care.
- Coordinate with community pharmacies to ensure the availability of alternative products.

6. NEL Pharmacy Primary Care Network & General Practice Communities of Practice Meeting Webinar



NEL Pharmacy Primary Care Network & General Practice Communities of Practice Meeting Webinar

 **Date: Thursday 1st May 2025**  **Time: 2:15 – 3:15 PM** **Location: MS Teams** [Link to join the meeting](#)

The meeting is open to all pharmacy professionals working in PCNs and General Practices. Your input can help shape the future of this Community of Practice, working collaboratively to enhance patient care and drive workforce transformation across North East London.

7. Antimicrobial Resistance and Stewardship learning event

Hold the Date: Antimicrobial Stewardship Learning Event


 **Date: Monday, 29th April 2025**  **Time: 12:00 – 2:00 PM**


Enhance your knowledge and skills in tackling one of the most critical challenges in healthcare today — antimicrobial resistance. Don't miss this opportunity to deepen your understanding and contribute to better antimicrobial stewardship across the system.

Join us for an informative session featuring expert speakers from NHSE and local Trusts.

This event will cover:

- Local epidemiology and trends
- Practical strategies for infection management
- Evidence-based approaches to optimise prescribing
- Initiatives to reduce inappropriate antimicrobial use

 Invitations will be sent to all prescribers in NEL from: nelondonicb.medicinesoptimisationenquiries@nhs.net

 Community Pharmacists will receive invites via the LPC.

8. Community Pharmacies Commissioned to Provide End-of-Life Care Medicines Service Early May Bank Holiday Opening Hours

Reminder to all primary care colleagues; North East London (NEL) has commissioned a designated number of community pharmacies to maintain a stock of commonly used End of Life (EoL) medications, to ensure timely access of end-of-life care medicines across NEL.

During the upcoming public holidays, there are five commissioned community pharmacies which will be open, however operating at their altered usual opening hours or reduced opening hours on Early May Bank Holiday (5th May 2025). This information is provided in the table below.

Please note that information about the late may bank holiday on May 26th 2025 is still to be confirmed and will be provided in due course. The out-of-hours service for End-of-Life Care medicines will remain unchanged for the rest of May.

The following [link](#) provides:

- A list of the NEL commissioned pharmacies who provide end-of-life care medicines (EoLC Medicines), including their contact details.
- Information on the medicines they stock.
- Guidance on accessing out-of-hours services and the pharmacies that provide this service.

Commissioned Community Pharmacy	Early May Bank Holiday Opening (5 th May 2025)
Woodgrange Pharmacy 116 Woodgrange Rd, Forest Gate, London E7 0EW Tel: 0208 555 5660	OPEN 10:00 - 18:00
Fairlop Pharmacy 87 High Street, Barkingside, IG6 2AH Tel 020 8551 3017	OPEN 12:00 - 23:59
Gold's Pharmacy Gants Hill , 24 Seven Ways Parade, Woodford Ave, Ilford IG2 6JX Tel: 020 8550 1050	OPEN 09:30 - 22:00
Beehive Pharmacy - 8 Beehive Lane, Gants Hill, IG1 3RD Tel: 0208 554 3560	OPEN 09:00-17:00
Forward Pharmacy 648 Mile End Road, London, E3 4LH Tel:0208 980 1231	OPEN 10:00 - 18:00

9. 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 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 MHRA information	For all MHRA updates on alerts, recalls and safety information on drugs and medical devices Alerts, recalls and safety information: drugs and medical devices - GOV.UK
Learn from Patient Safety Events Service (LFPSE)	For reporting patient safety incidents and misses NHS England » Learn from patient safety events (LFPSE) service
For Medicines Safety Tools - PrescQIPP	PrescQIPP - Medicines safety
For reporting suspected adverse effects/defects of medicines or devices – Yellow Card Scheme	Yellow Card Making medicines and medical devices safer

For your information:

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information included in this newsletter is correct at the time of publication. Throughout the newsletter, external links are provided to other sites. These links are provided to improve access to information and exist only for the convenience of readers of the newsletter; NEL ICB Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team cannot accept responsibility for their content. We cannot guarantee that these links will work all of the time and we have no control over the availability of the linked pages.

This newsletter is not to be used for commercial purposes.