

NEL Prescribing and Medicines Newsletter

May 2025

Updates for Community Pharmacies across North East London

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1. North East London Formulary and Pathways Group Update

Formulary Updates

Approved Item / Guidance and Pathway	Additional information
Prescribing Guidance and FAQ for Adrenaline Auto-injectors (AAIs) in primary care	Medicines Guidelines – Allergy – North East London
Relugolix for treating hormone-sensitive prostate cancer was approved for use across NEL as per NICE TA995.	<p>This drug is to be initiated by a specialist and can be continued in primary care (Amber, specialist initiation formulary status). A primary care prescribing support factsheet is available for specific information.</p> <p>As a reminder, please see the links below:</p> <p>Relugolix-Prescribing-Support-Fact-sheet-v1.1.pdf</p> <p>North East London Joint Formulary Formulary Overview Relugolix for treating hormone-sensitive prostate cancer Guidance NICE</p>

Pending Formulary Assessment

Fezolinetant: We have received a significant number of queries from practices on fezolinetant for treating moderate to severe vasomotor symptoms associated with menopause. The NICE Technology Appraisal (TA) is

expected towards the end of May 2025. The NEL Formulary and Pathway Group will review fezolinetant following the NICE TA publication. The outcome of the NEL review will be made available on the Net Formulary.

Please note that MHRA have issued an alert relating to fezolinetant with recommendations to minimise risk of drug induced liver injury, available [here](#).

2. MHRA Latest Drug Safety Updates

National Alert: Influenza season 2024/25: ending the prescribing and supply of antiviral medicines in primary care

A [central alerting system notification](#) was issued on 15th May 2025, to advise that surveillance data from UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) indicates that circulation of influenza in the community has returned to baseline levels.

Actions for community pharmacies

- Community pharmacists should no longer supply antiviral medicines in primary care on presentation of an FP10 prescription form.

Drug Safety Update: Risks from overuse of Short-acting beta-2 agonists (SABA)

A [Drug Safety Update](#) was published on 24th April 2025 to remind healthcare professionals of the risks from overuse of Short-acting beta-2 agonists (SABA) (salbutamol and terbutaline) in asthma and to be aware of changes in the SABA prescribing guidelines.

Recent reviews by the MHRA (UK) and PRAC (EU) highlight the risks associated with excessive short-acting beta-2 agonist (SABA) use, including severe asthma attacks and increased mortality. This has led to a significant shift in prescribing guidance.

Key updates

- SABA monotherapy is no longer recommended for any age group.
- Patients should no longer be prescribed inhaled corticosteroid (ICS) + SABA. Instead, use ICS + formoterol combination inhalers.
- Asthma action plans should be regularly reviewed and optimised to ensure patients receive appropriate maintenance therapy.

Regulatory Updates: [MHRA Drug Safety Update \(24 April 2025\)](#)

Healthcare professionals and patients are reminded of the risks linked to SABA overuse, whether used alone or with anti-inflammatory maintenance therapy. Increased reliance on SABA is associated with a higher risk of severe exacerbations and mortality. The MHRA now reinforces the guidance that **SABA should not be prescribed without ICS therapy**.

NEL Asthma Guidance

Updated [NEL Adult Asthma Guidance](#) already reflects these changes. NEL Paediatric Asthma Guidance is currently in draft and under local consultation. Updates will be shared once ratified. In the interim, healthcare professionals are encouraged to follow [NICE guidance for paediatric asthma management](#).

Clinical Considerations for Prescribers

To align with best practices, healthcare professionals are advised to:

- Avoid prescribing SABA without ICS inhalers.
- Reassess treatment for patients using SABA more than twice a week.
- Urgently review patients showing increased SABA use or uncollected ICS prescriptions.

- Recommend anti-inflammatory reliever (AIR) or maintenance and reliever (MART) for patients aged >12 with poorly controlled asthma.
- Ensure all asthma patients receive appropriate anti-inflammatory maintenance therapy.

National Medication Shortages

Please note there are national shortages of:

- Fentanyl (**Effentora**[®]) 200microgram, 400microgram, 600microgram, 800microgram buccal tablets, Fentanyl (**Actiq**[®]) 800microgram lozenges. Advice on alternatives and details of supply disruption can be found [here](#).
- Buprenorphine (**Reletrans**[®]) 5micrograms/hour and 15micrograms/hour transdermal patches. Advice on alternatives and details of supply disruption can be found [here](#).
- Lidocaine (**Xylocaine**[®]) 10mg/dose spray sugar free. Advice on alternatives and details of supply disruption can be found [here](#).
- There continues to be shortages of **Durogesic**[®] **DTrans**[®] 12micrograms/hour, 25micrograms/hour, 50micrograms/hour, 75micrograms/hour and 100micrograms/hour patches. Advice on alternatives (**Opiodur**[®], **Matrifen**[®], **Mezolar**[®] **Fencino**[®], **Yemex**[®]), listed in order of most cost-effective to least cost-effective and details of supply disruption can be found [here](#).

Serious Shortage Protocols

Due to ongoing supply issues, the following Serious Shortage Protocols currently in place for **Estradot**[®] **25mcg**, **50mcg**, **75mcg** and **100mcg** patches and **Cefalexin 125mg/5ml** and **250mg/5ml** oral suspension sugar free, have been extended.

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, supply issues and medicines safety information:

- [MHRA Drug Safety Updates](#)
- [SPS Medication Safety Update](#)
- [Alerts, recalls and safety information: medicines and medical devices](#)
- Letters, drug safety updates and medicines recalls sent to healthcare professionals in March and April 2025 can be found in the MHRA round up [here](#)

3. Translation Services for Community Pharmacies

Translation service is now available for access to Community Pharmacies in NEL

With the expansion of clinical services in community pharmacies, NEL ICB has recognised the need for access to translation service and has commissioned this to support consultations with our diverse patient population in NEL.

Community pharmacies can now register and request translation service through [Language Shop](#)[®]. The pharmacy will be required to make payments to Language Shop[®] for the translation services delivered. This can be reimbursed by submitting a claim to the London Pharmacy Contract team via emailing england.lon-pharmacy@nhs.net.

Language Shop[®] is the only provider commissioned in NEL to support translation services in community pharmacies. There will be no reimbursement from NEL ICB for translation costs incurred via any other providers apart from Language Shop[®].

An invoice template has been created for claim submissions to the London Pharmacy Contract team. All invoices must be sent within one month of the original invoice (from Language Shop® to the NEL Pharmacy Contract team) and after the service has been received.

There is an expectation from the ICB that usage of this funded translation services in community pharmacy should be reasonable, and the volume of usage will be monitored by the ICB.

Please refer to the email sent from the London Pharmacy Contract team on the 28th April 2025 for further information and resources.

4. Community Pharmacies Commissioned to Provide End-of-Life Care Medicines Service - Spring Bank Holiday Opening Hours

NEL ICB has commissioned a designated number of community pharmacies to maintain a stock of commonly used End of Life Care (EoLC) medications, to ensure timely access of EoLC medicines across NEL.

The following [link](#) provides:

- A list of the NEL commissioned pharmacies who provide 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.

During the Spring Bank Holiday (26th May 2025) the following six commissioned community pharmacies will be open, to ensure timely access of EoLC medicines for the in-hours part of the EoLC service.

Commissioned Community Pharmacy	Telephone	Opening Hours
Woodgrange Pharmacy 116 Woodgrange Rd, Forest Gate, London E7 0EW	0208 555 5660	10:00 - 18:00
Fairlop Pharmacy 87 High Street, Barking, IG6 2AH	020 8551 3017	12:00 - 23:59
Gold's Pharmacy Gants Hill 24 Seven Ways Parade, Woodford Ave, Ilford IG2 6JX	020 8550 1050	09:30 - 22:00
Beehive Pharmacy 8 Beehive Lane, Gants Hill, IG1 3RD	0208 554 3560	09:00 - 17:00
Forward Pharmacy 648 Mile End Road, London, E3 4LH	0208 980 1231	10:00 - 18:00
Britannia Pharmacy Barking Community Hosp Upney Lane, Barking IG119LX	020 8594 2686	11:00 - 15:00

5. Polypharmacy: Training, Tools & Resources for Safer Prescribing

I. Clinicians are encouraged to take advantage of a range of new resources and training sessions designed to support safer, more person-centred prescribing as part of the [Polypharmacy: Getting the Balance Right](#) programme.

Upcoming: Health Innovation Network (HIN) Action Learning Set Training (June)

HIN will run its next Polypharmacy Action Learning Set in June for primary care prescribers involved in Structured Medication Reviews. This interactive course focuses on safely stopping inappropriate medicines

and runs over three half-day sessions (9:30am-12:15pm) over one month.

[Register now – limited places](#)

II. 🏠 Masterclass: Polypharmacy & Learning Disabilities

People with a learning disability die 20 years younger than others and are often given multiple medications, including being 16 times more likely to be prescribed psychotropic medications. Stopping over medication of people with a learning disability and autistic people (STOMP) and supporting treatment and appropriate medication in paediatrics (STAMP) should be on every clinician's agenda. The masterclass focussed on a clinicians' role in supporting with structured, holistic and person-centred medication reviews.

The Health Innovation Network (HIN) has released a recording of its March 2025 masterclass focused on polypharmacy and people with learning disabilities –available to access [here](#).

- [Polypharmacy masterclass presentation](#)
- [Links from Polypharmacy and Learning Disabilities Masterclass](#)

For more information about STOMP and STAMP, please visit the following webpages:

- [NHS England » Stopping over medication of people with a learning disability and autistic people \(STOMP\) and supporting treatment and appropriate medication in paediatrics \(STAMP\)](#)
- [STOMP and STAMP - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)

6. PrescQIPP: Prescribing Mastery - Asthma

PrescQIPP Prescribing Mastery – Reflecting on prescribing in asthma: Session 2

 **Date: Wednesday 28th May 2025**  **Time: 1:00 – 2:00 PM**

This interactive session will encourage participants to reflect on their own prescribing practices, share experiences, and explore strategies for improvement.

The first session, ***“Do you know what the new NICE/BTS guidelines say, and how to apply them to your individual patients?”***, took place on 20th May 2025. It offered a deep dive into the latest updates from NICE and BTS, with practical insights on tailoring treatment to individual patient needs. The recording is available to access [here](#).

Secure your place for the second session and be part of a community committed to excellence in asthma management.

[Register to join here](#)

7. 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 Joint Formulary	https://www.nel-jointformulary.nhs.uk User guide: NEL netFormulary User Guide FINAL .pdf
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 Alerts	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
PrescQIPP Medicines Safety Tools	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:

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