

NEL Prescribing and Medicines Newsletter

January 2026

Updates for Community Pharmacy across North East London

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1. North East London Community Anticoagulation Service

The new NEL Community Anticoagulation service, which aims to provide a single streamlined service across NEL, launched on 1st January 2026.

The following information is available on the [Medicines Guidelines – Cardiovascular – North East London](#), under the **Community Anticoagulation Service** folder:

- NEL Community Anticoagulation Service Specification
- NEL Guidelines relating to the service
- Contact details for each of the new providers

2. MHRA Drug Safety Updates

Medicines Safety Update: Gabapentinoids, Benzodiazepines and Z-Drugs

MHRA has strengthened safety warnings for pregabalin, gabapentin, benzodiazepines and Z-drugs following a review confirming that current product information did not sufficiently communicate risks of addiction, dependence, withdrawal and tolerance. Updated warnings will appear across Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPCs), Patient Information Leaflets (PILs) and outer packaging over the coming months.

Refer to the [Drug Safety Update](#) for further guidance and information.

Medicines shortages

- **Co-codamol 30/500mg tablets** will be in limited supply from **mid-February 2026 to June 2026**. Refer to the [Medicines Supply Notification](#) for further actions.

Please refer to the [SPS Medicines Supply Tool](#) for details of all current medicines shortages (free registration to access).

NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs)

- All active SSPs can be accessed [here](#).

Further information on medicines safety

- [MHRA Safety Roundup: December 2025](#)

For further information on alerts, recalls, supply issues and medicines safety information please consult the [MHRA](#) tab on the Medicines Safety section of the [Medicines Optimisation page](#) on the Primary Care Portal.

3. FSA Alert: SMA® Alfamino® recall

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) issued an alert on 6 January 2027 advising that Nestlé has taken a precautionary step to recall several SMA® Formula products including Alfamino® (amino acid) infant formula (AAF) infant formula because they may contain cereulide toxin. Further details can be found [here](#).

Actions for pharmacies:

- Please note actions within the alert and follow your local procedures for recalled products, including quarantining and returning affected stock and referring affected patients back to their prescriber for review and an alternative product.
- Please ensure alternatives are recommended in line with the new North East London (NEL) [Cow's Milk Protein Allergy \(CMPA\) Guidelines](#). Using the NEL CMPA Guidelines, the current alternative to SMA® Alfamino® is Nutramigen Puramino® (see [here](#)).

4. Codeine linctus 15mg/5ml – fraudulent prescriptions

The NEL Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation team have received several reports of fraudulent codeine linctus 15mg/5ml private prescriptions in circulation. Codeine linctus was reclassified from a Pharmacy (P) medicine to a Prescription Only-Medicine (POM) in 2024 owing to the risk of dependence, addiction, and overdose (see details [here](#)).

Actions for community pharmacies:

- Staff should remain vigilant and carry out due diligence checks for NHS and private prescriptions for all schedules of Controlled Drugs (CDs) (see guidance on how to spot a fraudulent prescription [here](#)).
- Use the [CD reporting tool](#) to report all incidents concerning CDs. Non-emergency fraud should be reported to Report Fraud (formerly Action Fraud) at www.reportfraud.police.uk, or by calling 0300 123 2040 if a fraudulent prescription is presented at your community pharmacy.

Please check the [controlled drugs tab](#) on the Medicines Safety section of the [Medicines Optimisation page](#) on the Primary Care Portal for further guidance on reporting incidents and concerns.

5. Insulin product discontinuations - reminder

Clinicians are reminded that two different insulin products being discontinued: **Admelog® (insulin lispro) cartridges, pre-filled pens and vials and Levemir® (insulin detemir) FlexPen and Penfill.**

Admelog® (insulin lispro) cartridges, pre-filled pens and vials.

Supplies are anticipated to be exhausted by **mid-March 2026** (cartridges), **late March 2026** (pre-filled pens) and **mid-June 2026** (vials) respectively.

Clinicians are advised to:

- Not initiate new patients on Admelog®, which is a biosimilar insulin product.
- Review existing patients and consider switching to the originator insulin product, Humalog® 100units/ml solution for injection, which can fully support the increased demand.
- For further information and actions, refer to the [Medicines Supply Notification](#).
- Check the [SPS Medicines Supply Tool](#) for the latest supply information, before switching.

Details of these product discontinuations were covered in the September 2025 edition of the newsletter, please click [here](#) for the full information and recommendations.

Levemir® (insulin detemir) FlexPen and Penfill

Stock is expected to be discontinued by **December 2026**.

Clinicians are advised to:

- STOP initiating new patients on Levemir® FlexPen and Penfill.
- Start to plan patient switches now, switching patients already on Levemir®, to suitable alternative insulins in line with national clinical guidance: [Discontinuation of Levemir \(insulin detemir\): Joint guidance from ABCD and PCDO Society](#).
- Diversify prescribing across available alternatives recommended in the supporting guidance and before prescribing **please check with local pharmacy and use the SPS Medicines Supply Tool to confirm stock availability** (e.g. Lantus®, Semglee®, Toujeo®, Tresiba® cartridges/U200 FlexTouch®) to minimise supply risks.
- For further information and actions in the interim, refer to the updated [Medicines Supply Notification](#). Check the [SPS Medicines Supply Tool](#) before switching for the latest supply information.

Further NEL guidance will be shared in due course, to support safe transition to alternative insulins.

6. Formulary and Pathways Group Update

Formulary Updates	
Approved Item / Guidance and Pathway	Additional Information
Bempedoic acid tablets and bempedoic acid with ezetimibe tablets for primary hypercholesterolaemia (heterozygous familial and non-familial) or mixed dyslipidaemia (from Amber to Green status)	Formulary change from Amber to Green A primary care support fact sheet to support the prescribing has been produced: Primary Care Prescribing support Factsheets – North East London
NEL CYP Asthma guidelines in children aged 5–11 years - updated to include licensed Symbicort	NEL Primary Care Children and Young People - Asthma Prescribing Guidance-v2.1

Turbohaler 100/6 for use as Maintenance and Reliever Therapy (MART)	And Primary care management of asthma in children aged 5 to 11 years
Drospirenone (Slynd®) progesterone only oral contraceptive pill	Formulary status Green Medicine can be initiated in primary and secondary care (2 nd line Progesterone Only Pill)
Guidance for North East London Community Anticoagulation Providers on the safe switching of warfarin to DOACs for patients with non-valvular AF	Guidance for the safe switching of warfarin to DOAC
Guideline for the Management of Type 2 Diabetes North East London – update	NEL Guideline for the Management of Type 2 Diabetes
Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) on discharge from Hospital – position statement	ONS Hospital Discharge Position Statement
NELFT Shared Care expiry extensions	NELFT Shared Care Guidelines for the Treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents (under 18 years of age) Methylphenidate, Dexamfetamine, Atomoxetine, Lisdexamfetamine and Guanfacine NELFT Shared Care Guidelines on Melatonin for sleep disorders/difficulties in children until their 18th birthday

7. One Catheter Passport

From **9th December 2025**, all health and social care staff involved in catheter care are being asked to use the One London Catheter Passport.

What is the One Catheter Passport for London?

One Catheter Passport for London is a practical and pragmatic document that gives the patient/their carer(s) contact details for the relevant healthcare teams and who to contact in an emergency and out-of-hours.

At this time, the Passport is only available to download and print in hard copy, but it forms the blueprint for a digital communication tool that is being developed.

For more information and to download the Passport please use the documents below:

- [One London Catheter Passport with Patient Info Combined \(Template to Print\)](#)
- [One London Catheter Passport Information Pack for Clinicians](#)
- [One Catheter Passport for London - Letter from Benjamin Ayres](#)

8. NHS App Training and Education Hub

The NHSE NHS App Training and Education Hub is now live!

Join the [NHS App training and education hub](#) to learn:

- Practical step by step tips for using the app
- What GP surgeries or pharmacists need to do in their IT systems to make the NHS App work

- How to troubleshoot and solve common problems patients may encounter with the NHS App
- Plans for the NHS App

You can also find materials to use in your workplace or on your website to promote the app. The training and education hub brings together all existing NHS App training and support resources into one accessible space. This is an interim solution while the official training model is being developed.

9. National Lunch and Learn: Mental Health and Genomics

You are invited to join a free Lunch & Learn education session on the topic “**Mental Health and Genomics: Implementing evidenced based practice and reducing health inequalities**”.

This session will cover:

- The role of genomic investigations within mental health care
- Insights on how to implement evidence into practice
- Pharmacogenomics in mental health

Please refer to the event website for more details, and share with your relevant teams and networks.

Date: Wednesday, 25 February 2026

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Mode: Online, Microsoft Teams

Register now: <https://re-ur.uk/WJM1>

10. PresQIPP Updates

Updates

1: Talking Meds Episode 34 & 35. Looking back on 2025 in the world of medicines and prescribing. Link can be found here: [Talking Meds episode 34](#) and [Talking Meds episode 35](#) are now available

2: Bulletin 342. Alternative to specials database: This is a “Specials” resources, including good practice and how to optimise the use of licensed medicines, alternatives and reviews to be done to support the reduced use of specials. Link can be found here: [Specials](#)

Upcoming Webinars:

PCN / practice pharmacists and pharmacy technicians may find the following upcoming webinar useful:

Date	Time	Webinar
28 th January	1-2pm	Prescribing Mastery: Skin Conditions: Prescribing in Primary Care: session 2 Register to join this session here
29 th January	1-2pm	Clinical Masterclass - Safe and appropriate use of medicines in paediatrics Register to join this session here
5 th February	1-2pm	Innovating for Impact: A Technology based approach to safer Enoxaparin self-management Link to webinar can be accessed here: Winner - Innovating for Impact: A Technology based approach to safer Enoxaparin self-management. (2025)
13 th February	1-2pm	Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes ICB – Care Home Medicines Optimisation Team present on ICB-Led Medication Training Offer for Adult Social Care Staff, including Medication Champions Training on. Link to webinar can be found here: ICB-Led Medication Training Offer for Adult Social Care Staff, including Medication Champions Training (2025)

Access to previous webinars [here](#).

To access PrescQIPP resources for the first time, you are required to [register](#) for a free account. When completing your registration, please select “ICS North East London” as your organisation.

11. Contact Details and Additional Resources

CONTACT DETAILS

NEL ICB Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team	For prescribing and medicines enquiries: nelondonicb.prescribingqueries@nhs.net
Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) Medicines Advice	For all patient specific clinical queries please use the following SPS contact: asksp.sps@sp.sps.direct
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 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:

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