

NEL Prescribing and Medicines Newsletter

April 2026

Updates for Primary Care across North East London

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Important Update: Levemir® (Insulin Detemir) Discontinuation | 1 |
| 2. London-wide Medicines Waste Campaign | 1 |
| 3. Formulary and Pathways Group (FPG) Updates | 2 |
| 4. Guidance Note for the Prescribing Intervals of Repeat Prescriptions | 2 |
| 5. Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAs) Update | 2 |
| 6. Structured Medication Reviews (SMRs) in problematic polypharmacy: antimicrobial focus | 3 |
| 7. PrescQIPP Updates | 3 |
| 8. Contact Details and Additional Resources | 3 |

1. Important Update: Levemir® (Insulin Detemir) Discontinuation

Novo Nordisk is discontinuing **Levemir® Penfill®** and **Levemir® FlexPen®**. A recent [Medicines Supply Notification](#) highlights that, although UK stock is currently anticipated to last until December 2026, there is an increasing risk of earlier stock depletion, reinforcing the need for timely and coordinated switching.

There is no direct switch for Levemir® (insulin detemir). Patients will need careful switching and additional monitoring when moving to alternative insulin products.

Please refer to the [NEL Guidance note](#) for more information.

Further updates on stock availability and resources to support the identification of patients prescribed Levemir® and moving to alternative insulins in primary care, will be provided shortly.

Actions for General Practice:

- **STOP** initiating new patients on Levemir® FlexPen® or Penfill®.
- Prioritise review of patients currently prescribed Levemir®, in line with [national clinical guidance](#).
- Diversify prescribing across recommended alternative insulins to support demand.
- Check stock availability, before prescribing, using the [SPS Medicines Supply Tool](#).

2. London-wide medicines waste campaign

From March to May 2026, NHS organisations across London are promoting the “Only order what you need” campaign to help reduce unnecessary medicines waste.

Patients are encouraged to:

- Check their existing medicines before reordering and only request what is still needed
- Speak to their GP if medicines are no longer being taken
- Avoid stockpiling
- Check their prescription bag before leaving the pharmacy

- Return unwanted or unused medicines to any community pharmacy for safe disposal

How **GP practices** can support this campaign:

- Reinforce these key messages with patients
- Encourage patients to only order items they genuinely need
- Display campaign posters in waiting areas and consultation rooms
- Access and download campaign materials in the link below:

Find out more and help share the message: [Only order what you need – North East London](#)

3. Formulary and Pathways Group (FPG) Updates

| Approved Item / Guidance and Pathway | Additional information |
|---|---|
| NEL netFormulary training video | <p>NEL netFormulary Training webinar</p> <p>This NEL netFormulary training webinar provides an overview of the North East London Joint Formulary, including its purpose and structure, and demonstrates how to navigate the platform effectively. It uses practical examples to show how to search for medicines and interpret the formulary key, and highlights supporting resources to aid informed clinical decision-making.</p> |
| <p>NEL High-Cost Drugs Ophthalmology Pathways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical retina treatment pathway for macular oedema secondary to retinal vein occlusion NEL-V1 02.2026 • Medical retina treatment pathway for visual impairment associated with centre-involving diabetic macular oedema NEL-V1 02.2026 • Medical retina treatment pathway for wet age-related macular NEL-V1.1 02.2026 (Updated to show aflibercept 8mg and faricimab are equal in position as second choice options) | |

4. Guidance Note for the Prescribing Intervals of Repeat Prescriptions

NEL ICB has published guidance on repeat prescribing intervals to support safe, effective and proportionate prescribing across North East London. The guidance recommends 28 day prescribing as the usual interval where clinically appropriate, with flexibility for up to 56 days for stable patients on non complex regimens. Exceptions are included where it is specifically informed by professional clinical judgement or for medicines that come in special pack sizes. It also reinforces limits for controlled drugs (maximum 30 days) and encourages use of electronic repeat dispensing ([eRD](#)) where appropriate. Please see for more information [Prescribing information – North East London](#)

5. Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAs) Update

Clinicians in primary care can now access the approved [NEL prescribing guidance for Adrenaline Auto-Injectors \(AAs\)](#). The recorded session is available to watch on the NEL YouTube Channel—click here to view.: <https://youtu.be/s8HGyk776MM>

6. Structured Medication Reviews (SMRs) in Problematic Polypharmacy: Antimicrobial Focus

This will be a facilitated case-based discussion about the complexities of managing problematic polypharmacy and deprescribing, in patients on antimicrobials, with a specific focus on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and acne. Please visit the [event page on the SPS website](#) for registration and access details.

Tuesday 12th May 1-2pm.

7. PrescQIPP Updates

Forthcoming PrescQIPP Webinars

| Date & time | Webinar |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Wed 06 May 2026 1pm - 2pm | Prescribing mastery: Type 2 Diabetes: Session 2 Link to register: Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams |
| Wed 03 June 2026 1pm - 2pm | Quality & Outcomes Framework 2026/27: Turning Indicators into Impact Link: Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams |

8. 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: askspns.nhs@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 Training video: NEL netFormulary Training webinar |
| For Pharmacy & Medicines Optimisation Team Resources | https://primarycare.northeastlondon.icb.nhs.uk/home/meds/ |
| For PGD Updates | UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) – click here SPS – click here NHS England (NHSE) – click here |
| 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/1. Register with SPS free-of-charge to access. |
| 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.