

NEL Prescribing and Medicines Newsletter

May 2026

Updates for Community Pharmacy across North East London

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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.

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

Actions for community pharmacy teams:

- If a prescription for Levemir® is received:
 - Advise the patient that their **GP or diabetes specialist will contact them** to discuss an alternative insulin.
 - Reassure the patient that they will continue to receive insulin treatment.
 - Explain that Levemir® will be discontinued by **December 2026**, but other options are available.

2. Domperidone 1mg/1ml oral suspension – shortage

Domperidone 1mg/ml oral suspension is affected by an ongoing supply issue and is expected to be out of stock until September 2026. Please consider the alternatives below.

Advice for community pharmacy teams:

- Reserve parallel import (PI) domperidone 1mg/ml oral suspension for **paediatric patients only**. Please refer to the [SPS Medicines Supply Tool](#) for suppliers and alternatives.

- Domperidone 10mg tablets and orodispersible (Epzit®) 10mg tablets remain available and can support increased demand.
- Secondary care can only maintain supplies for internal use. On-going supplies are expected to be sourced from community pharmacies.

3. Look-alike/sound-alike prescribing errors: topical corticosteroids

The NEL Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation team has been made aware of several prescribing errors in which clobetasol propionate (Dermovate®), a very potent topical corticosteroid, has been prescribed to children without first trialling lower-potency steroids. Clobetasone butyrate (Eumovate®) is a moderately potent topical corticosteroid and is a look-alike, sound-alike medicine to clobetasol propionate (Dermovate®).

Actions for community pharmacy teams:

- Pharmacy teams should familiarise themselves with the [BNF](#) information on topical corticosteroid potencies and the [MHRA Drug Safety Update](#).
- Pharmacy teams should check with the patient's guardian or prescriber that any clobetasol propionate (Dermovate®) prescribed for children under 12 years has been recommended by a specialist. The patient should be referred back to the prescriber if this is not the case.
- Pharmacy teams should ensure all staff are aware of look-alike, sound-alike medicines (LASA), see the [PrescQIPP](#) resources available (free registration required for access).

4. Community Pharmacy Selfcare Advice Service (CPSAS) – Price Concession Payment

From April 2026, CPSAS price concession payments for commissioned pharmacies will move from monthly to quarterly payments, following agreement with Community Pharmacy North East London. Payments for CPSAS activity fees and product reimbursement will continue to be made monthly.

Applicable concession payments will be processed in the final month of each quarter. For example, concessions relating to April to June will be processed in June and paid in August, alongside June CPSAS activity fees and product reimbursement payments.

Pharmacies are advised to take this change into account when reviewing expected payment timelines. This arrangement will apply to all payments from April 2026 onwards.

5. Items which should not be routinely prescribed in primary care – NEL position statement

A new NEL ICB position statement on [items not routinely prescribed in primary care](#) is now available on the Medicines Optimisation Portal.

The guidance supports [NHS England guidance](#) and the [NEL Joint Formulary](#), with input from primary and secondary care clinicians. It includes:

- Items where **no** exceptions apply.
- Items that may be prescribed in defined circumstances.

[Patient information leaflets](#) are also available for commonly prescribed items to help explain prescribing restrictions.

Actions for community pharmacy teams:

- Reinforce consistent messaging where patients have queries.
- Signpost patients to the appropriate OTC preparation in line with the guidance.

The position statement supports safe, appropriate and cost-effective prescribing across North East London.

6. NEL ICS Pharmacy Workforce Transformation Group – Primary Care representatives required

The NEL ICS Pharmacy Workforce Transformation Group has four priority workstreams (see table below) focused on pharmacy workforce development across North East London, identified through collaboration across all pharmacy sectors.

We are seeking Pharmacists, and Pharmacy Technicians based in PCN/GP practices or community pharmacies to join one or more workstreams through monthly one-hour meetings. If you would like to get involved - or stay informed and support delivery if you cannot attend meetings -, please contact ruma.rahman@nhs.net.

This is a great opportunity to help shape pharmacy workforce transformation and expand your network across partner organisations in North East London.

Pharmacy Workforce Workstreams:	Newly Qualified Pharmacist Prescribing	Designated Prescribing Practitioners (DPPs)	Pharmacy Technician	Supervision
Aim:	To create a clear and structured development roadmap that enables newly qualified independent prescribing pharmacists to effectively utilise their qualification.	Increase number, quality and diversity of DPPs. Quality assurance on DPP training.	Upskilling and retention of pharmacy technician across sectors.	Establish what current clinical supervision looks like across sectors for: - Newly qualified, - post Independent Prescribing qualification or - other post graduate training. Create guidance for clinical supervision in priority areas

7. NEL ICS Pharmacy Workforce Transformation Group - Surveys

The NEL Pharmacy Workforce Transformation Group is seeking feedback to support three key workstreams. We would appreciate your support in completing the short surveys below (each takes less than 5 minutes):

(i) NEL Pharmacy Technician Development Scoping Survey

Help us understand current development opportunities for Pharmacy Technicians across NEL and identify future career progression support needs.

Deadline: 31 May 2026 - [NEL Pharmacy Technician Development Scoping Survey 2026](#)

(ii) Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP) Survey

We are gathering feedback from current and aspiring DPPs, including interest in joining a future DPP supervision support database. Responses are anonymous.

Deadline: 1 June 2026 - [NEL Pharmacy DPP Survey 2026](#)

(iii) NEL Supervision Scoping Survey

Share your insights on current clinical supervision arrangements for pharmacy professionals and support staff across sectors.

Deadline: 15 June 2026 - [NEL Pharmacy Supervision Survey 2026](#)

8. Formulary and Pathways Group (FPG) Updates

Approved Item / Guidance and Pathway	Additional information
NEL Position statement: Items which should not be routinely prescribed in primary care in North East London and supporting Patient Information Leaflets	Medicines Position Statements – NEL – North East London
Travoprost 0.004% preservative-free eye drops (Visutrax®)	Amber 2: Initiated by ophthalmology specialist, 1 month supply on initiation by hospital and thereafter supply from primary care
Losartan + hydrochlorothiazide tablets (For the treatment of complex hypertension)	Green: Medicines that can be initiated in primary and secondary care.

9. PrescQIPP Updates

PrescQIPP Bulletins: Bulletin 376. Teratogenic medicines, link can be found here: [Bulletin 376. Teratogenic medicines](#)

PrescQIPP Podcast: Talking Meds Episode 42. Medication safety initiatives, link can be found here: [Talking Meds Episode 42. Medication safety initiatives with Emma Kirk](#)

PrescQIPP Virtual Professional Group: Care homes: Addressing overprescribing in frail older people living in care homes. Register here: [Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)

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.

10. 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:
asksps.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
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/I. 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:

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