

NEL Prescribing and Medicines Newsletter

July 2026

Updates for Community Pharmacy across North East London

Contents

1. Important Update: Levemir® (Insulin Detemir) Discontinuation	1
2. Clozapine Prescribing and Supply: Learning from a Recent Patient Safety Incident	2
3. Accurate Blood Pressure Recording: A Patient Safety Priority	3
4. NEL Prescribing Efficiency Scheme (PES) 2026/27	3
5. Heatwave Reminder: Safe Storage of Medicines	4
6. Ensuring Patient Choice in EPS Nomination	4
7. NEL Smoking Cessation - update	5
8. Only Order What You Need campaign survey	5
9. PrescQIPP Updates	5
10. Contact Details and Additional Resources	6

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

Novo Nordisk is discontinuing **Levemir® Penfill®** and **Levemir® FlexPen®**. [Medicines Supply Notifications](#) 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.
 - Contact a patient's practice if they haven't heard from their GP or diabetes specialist by 31/8/26.
 - 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.
 - Be alert to unusually large quantities prescribed and, where appropriate, query these with the prescriber to help prevent stockpiling and support equitable availability for all patients during the transition period.

2. Clozapine Prescribing and Supply: Learning from a Recent Patient Safety Incident

A recent patient safety incident in North East London (NEL) has highlighted the importance of following local arrangements for **clozapine prescribing and supply**. During a patient's transfer of care, an outdated clinic letter was used to inform prescribing in primary care, resulting in an incorrect clozapine dose being prescribed and subsequently dispensed by a community pharmacy, while the patient continued to also receive clozapine through their specialist mental health service.

Key learning

- Clozapine is a **RED** formulary medicine within the NEL Joint Formulary and **must only be prescribed as part of an approved specialist clozapine service**.
- Due to its high-risk safety profile and mandatory blood monitoring requirements, clozapine **must only be prescribed, dispensed and supplied through an approved specialist clozapine monitoring service**.
- Community pharmacies should be alert to the risks associated with dispensing clozapine prescriptions issued outside established specialist pathways.
- Reliance on outdated clinical correspondence can result in dosing errors, duplicate supplies and serious patient harm.

Actions for community pharmacies

- Review PMR systems to identify any patients currently receiving clozapine supplies through community pharmacy.
- If a clozapine prescription is received from primary care, **do not dispense**. Please contact the patient's GP practice and advise the relevant clinician that prescribing should be repatriated to the patient's community mental health team; and inform the patient.
- Ensure all pharmacy staff are aware that clozapine is a specialist medicine and understand the appropriate escalation process when prescriptions are presented.
- If a patient reports that they have run out of clozapine, **contact the relevant specialist mental health service** urgently to support the patient in obtaining an ongoing supply through the approved clozapine monitoring pathway.

ELFT	NELFT
City & Hackney: • Email: elft.CityandHackneyClozapine@nhs.net • Contact number: 020 8525 1115	Waltham Forest: Contact number – 0300 300 1570 (Option 4)
Newham: • Email: elft.ClozapineTeam@nhs.net • Contact number: 020 8548 5160	Redbridge: Contact number – 0300 300 1706
Tower Hamlets: • Email: elft.TH-Clozapine@nhs.net • Contact number: 020 7426 2350	Barking & Dagenham: Contact number – 0300 300 1570 (Option 3) Havering: Contact number – 0300 555 1083 (Option 2)

3. Accurate Blood Pressure Recording: A Patient Safety Priority

NHS monitoring of the Hypertension Case Finding Service (HCFS) has identified discrepancies in some blood pressure (BP) data submitted by community pharmacies, mainly due to documentation errors and incorrect categorisation of readings. As BP results are shared with GP practices to support hypertension diagnosis and management, accurate recording is essential.

Key actions for pharmacy teams

- Ensure all staff are trained to use NHS-assured IT systems and record BP measurements in line with the [national HCFS service specification](#) (Annexes B, C & D).
- Regularly audit BP data quality.
- Complete refresher training on clinic BP measurement and Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM).
- Use training resources from [CPPE](#) and [Community Pharmacy England](#).

Key reminders

- Community pharmacies are responsible for measuring and communicating BP results - not diagnosing hypertension.
- Ensure clinic BP and ABPM readings are correctly categorised and follow the service specification for advising, referring or escalating patients with raised readings or concerning symptoms.
- GP practices rely on accurate data to inform diagnosis, treatment and follow-up. Pharmacy teams staying up to date with HCFS guidance and training supports safe, effective patient care.

4. NEL Prescribing Efficiency Scheme (PES) 2026/27

The NEL Prescribing Efficiency Scheme (PES) 2026/27 launched to NEL GP practices on 13th July 2026 and will run until 31st March 2027. The scheme aims to improve prescribing efficiency by optimising treatment in line with current evidence-based guidance and the NEL formulary, while reducing unnecessary prescribing costs.

This year's scheme focuses on two key areas:

1. Optimising SGLT2 inhibitor prescribing

- Switching eligible adult patients from empagliflozin, canagliflozin or ertugliflozin to **generic dapagliflozin**, where clinically appropriate across all licensed indications.
- Achieving and maintaining ≥90% of new SGLT2 inhibitor initiations with **dapagliflozin** across all licensed indications.

This work is supported by the [NEL Preferred SGLT2i Position Statement](#).

2. Optimising Oral Nutritional Supplement (ONS) prescribing

- Increasing prescribing of **NEL first-line formulary powdered ONS products**.
- Increasing prescribing in line with the **NEL ONS Formulary**.

This work is supported by the [NEL Guidance on Oral Nutritional Supplements \(ONS\)](#), which outlines Formulary ONS choices.

What this means for community pharmacy teams

Community pharmacies can expect to see an increase in prescriptions for **generic dapagliflozin** and **NEL formulary ONS products**. Patients will receive information about any medication changes from their GP practice however, pharmacy teams are asked to reinforce these messages and provide appropriate counselling at the point of dispensing to support, patient understanding and adherence.

The NEL ICB Medicines and Pharmacy Team is finalising patient information leaflets to support the switching programme. These will be shared with community pharmacies in the coming weeks.

5. Heatwave Reminder: Safe Storage of Medicines

High temperatures can affect the quality, safety and effectiveness of medicines. During periods of hot weather, pharmacies should ensure medicines are stored within recommended temperature ranges and take prompt action if storage temperatures are exceeded.

Actions for pharmacy teams

- Monitor ambient temperatures in medicines storage areas.
- Keep storage areas cool and well ventilated.
- Manage any temperature excursions promptly, including quarantining affected stock where appropriate and following [SPS guidance](#) – ([free registration required](#)).
- Be prepared to advise patients on safe medicine storage during hot weather.

Patient advice

Remind patients to store medicines as directed on the label or patient information leaflet, keep medicines away from direct sunlight and heat, and speak to the pharmacy team if they are concerned that medicines have been exposed to high temperatures.

Patients can also find further information on safe medicine storage during hot weather at: [How to keep medicines safe during hot weather](#).

6. Ensuring Patient Choice in EPS Nomination

The **Electronic Prescription Service (EPS)** is an important part of modern NHS care, helping patients receive their prescriptions efficiently and conveniently. All pharmacy teams are, however, reminded that **EPS nominations must always be led by the patient's choice and supported by their consent**.

Patients have the right to choose whichever pharmacy they prefer to receive their electronic prescriptions. They may also change or remove their nomination at any time. Similar to any of the professional services, pharmacy staff should ensure patients are provided with sufficient and timely information to help them make an informed decision, without any influence or persuasion. Influences include but are not limited to:- gifts, rewards or discounts.

Importantly, nominations must never be set, changed or reconfirmed without the patient's knowledge and agreement. Obtaining patient consent for nominations is a local process. Keeping a record of patient's consent in relation to EPS nominations is not mandatory but is recommended in case of future queries or challenges.

When discussing EPS, pharmacy teams should:

- Clearly explain what EPS nomination means.
- Confirm the patient's preferred pharmacy and this must be the patient's choice of pharmacy.
- Changes to every nomination must only be made upon the individual patient's request.
- Obtain the patient's consent before recording or changing a nomination.
- Remind patients that they can change their nomination whenever they wish.
- Maintain accurate records that reflect the patient's current preference.

Adhering to NHS EPS nomination standards helps safeguard patient autonomy, promotes trust in community pharmacy services, and ensures compliance with NHS requirements.

Please see updated national [EPS nomination standards](#) for full information.

7. NEL Smoking Cessation - update

The North East London (NEL) Smoking Cessation Supply Arrangement within the Primary Care Guidelines have been updated for Havering and Barking & Dagenham.

The revised guidance is available on the Medicines Optimisation portal: [Medicines Guidelines – Smoking Cessation – North East London](#)

Please note: If you download the Word version of the guidance, you will need to click "Enable Editing" on the yellow Protected View banner at the top of the document to access any hyperlinks or embedded files.

8. “Only order what you need” campaign - survey

The Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation team thanks community pharmacies for supporting the London-wide *Only Order What You Need* medicines waste campaign and promoting the key messages to help patients reduce medicines waste.

As the campaign ended in June, the team is evaluating what worked well locally. Feedback will help inform future initiatives and improve support for practices, community pharmacies and patients.

Community pharmacies are asked to complete this short evaluation survey: [Complete the evaluation form](#)

The team thanks community pharmacies for their continued support. Campaign resources are available [here](#).

9. PrescQIPP Updates

PrescQIPP Podcast: Talking Meds. Episode 44: Pain management with Prof. Sailesh Mishra

Link: [PrescQIPP Podcast: Talking Meds](#)

Forthcoming PrescQIPP Webinars

Date	Webinar
Prescribing mastery: Frailty 1: Wed 16 Sept 2026: Session 1 of 2 1pm - 2pm	Link: PrescQIPP Prescribing Mastery - Frailty - Session 2
Prescribing mastery: Frailty 2: Wed 30 Sept 2026: Session 2 of 2 1pm - 2pm	Link: PrescQIPP Prescribing Mastery - Frailty - Session 2

10. Contact Details and Additional Resources

CONTACT DETAILS

NEL ICB Medicines and Pharmacy 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
Medication Safety Updates (including learning from Prevention of Future Deaths (PFD) reports)	To view critical medication safety alerts, notifications, publications, updates and learning and recommendations from PFD reports click here (free registration required).
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.