

NEL Prescribing and Medicines Newsletter

July 2026

Updates for Primary Care across North East London

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1. Important update: Levemir® (insulin detemir) Discontinuation

Novo Nordisk® is discontinuing **Levemir® Penfill®** and **Levemir® FlexPen®**. NHS England has advised that the majority of patients should be switched by **30th September 2026** allowing time for follow up and earlier than anticipated stock depletion. By **30 November 2026** all patients should be switched from Levemir®.

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

Actions for General Practice:

- **STOP** initiating new patients on Levemir® FlexPen® or Penfill®.
- Run clinical searches to identify all patients currently prescribed Levemir®. Searches are available on both EMIS and SystmOne across NEL practices, stored in practice support searches under '*Externally created resources*'.
- Prioritise review of patients currently prescribed Levemir® starting with Type 1 diabetic patients, complex patients requiring specialist care, paediatric and adolescent patients under the care of specialist diabetes teams who should be managed in accordance with specialist pathways.
- Check whether patients currently under specialist care have a routine appointment with their diabetes specialist team scheduled before September 2026.
- If an appointment is scheduled after this date or no appointment is scheduled, notify the relevant specialist service (secondary care or community) using the most appropriate route, e.g. Advice & Guidance (A&G), so an appointment can be scheduled before September 2026.
- Where primary care staff with diabetes specialist expertise or other suitably experienced clinicians are available, practices should prioritise all other patients for review in line with [national clinical guidance](#).
- Diversify prescribing across recommended alternative insulins to support demand.
- Check stock availability using the [SPS Medicines Supply Tool](#) and [SPS safety considerations when switching insulin](#) before prescribing.

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

A recent medicines safety incident in North East London (NEL) has highlighted the risks associated with inappropriate clozapine prescribing following a patient's transfer of care. In this case, an outdated clinic letter was used to inform prescribing in primary care resulting in an incorrect dose being issued while the patient continued to receive clozapine through their specialist mental health service.

Key learning

- Clozapine is a **RED** formulary medicine within the NEL Joint Formulary and **must not be prescribed in general practice**.
- Due to its significant safety risks, clozapine requires **specialist prescribing, mandatory blood monitoring and supply through a specialist pharmacy service**.
- Reliance on outdated clinical correspondence can lead to prescribing errors, duplication of therapy and potentially serious patient harm.
- In NEL, clozapine **must only be prescribed and supplied through an approved specialist clozapine monitoring service and dispensed by the associated specialist pharmacy team**.

Actions for GP practices

- Undertake a clinical system search to identify any patients currently prescribed clozapine in primary care. If any patients are identified, contact the patient's Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) to arrange transfer of clozapine prescribing back to the specialist service.
- Review medicines reconciliation processes for newly registered patients to ensure **RED** medicines are identified and managed in accordance with the NEL Joint Formulary.
- Ensure prescribing decisions and medication reviews are based on the **most recent clinical correspondence and specialist recommendations**.
- If a patient reports that they have run out of clozapine, contact their specialist CMHT urgently (see contact details below) to arrange ongoing supply and prevent interruption to treatment. For patients who reside outside NEL, obtain details of their current mental health provider and contact the relevant specialist service immediately.

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)

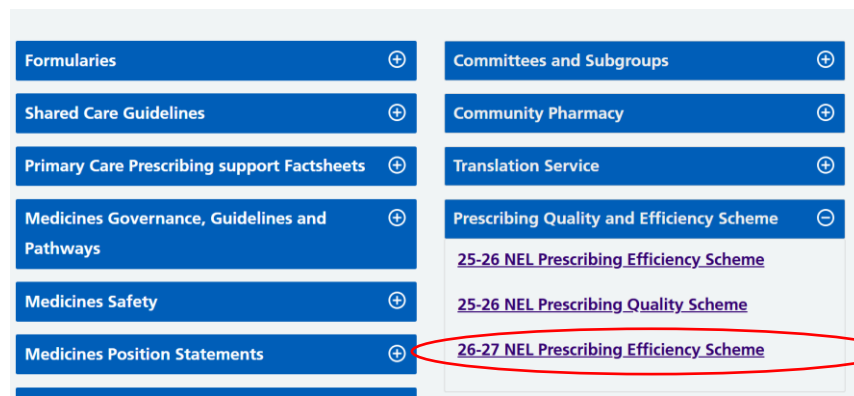
3. NEL Prescribing Efficiency Scheme 2026/27

On **Monday 13th July**, all NEL practices should have received an email notifying them of the launch of the **NEL Prescribing Efficiency Scheme (PES) 2026/27**.

The scheme has two main areas of focus:

- Optimisation of SGLT2 inhibitor prescribing through the use of **generic dapagliflozin**.
- Optimisation of Oral Nutritional Supplement (ONS) prescribing through the use of **first-line NEL formulary choice products**.

The 2026/27 Prescribing Efficiency Scheme folder, located on the [Medicines Optimisation – GP Portal](#), contains full details of the scheme and supporting resources.



The folder includes:

- A pre-recorded launch webinar and slide set.
- Full scheme document which outlines all details of PES 26/27.
- Practice level baseline data for PES 26/27 indicators.
- Practice links to CoordinateRx dashboard to review monthly progress with PES 26/27 indicators.
- Supporting information resources for each workstream (e.g. NEL guidance, SGLT2i Switch Protocol, patient information resources).
- Clinical System Searches to help practices identify patients for review.
- Details on 3rd Party (MORPh) ONS workstream and links to Expression of Interest forms.

Following the launch of the scheme, the NEL Medicines and Pharmacy Team will be holding monthly PES 2026/27 Drop-In Information Sessions on the following dates:

- Wednesday 16th September 1-2pm [Registration Link](#)
- Tuesday 13th October 1-2pm [Registration Link](#)
- Thursday 12th November 1-2pm [Registration Link](#)
- Wednesday 9th December 1-2pm [Registration Link](#)
- Tuesday 19th January 1-2pm [Registration Link](#)

These sessions will provide an opportunity for practices to ask questions and seek clarification on the scheme.

All NEL practices are welcome and encouraged to register and attend.

Please ensure that all relevant practice staff are included on the NEL Medicines and Pharmacy Team mailing list to receive future communications. Requests to be added to the mailing list can be sent to:

nelondonicb.medicinesoptimisationenquiries@nhs.net.

4. Heatwave Reminder: Safe Storage of Medicines

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

Actions for practices

- Monitor room temperatures where medicines are stored.
- Keep storage areas well ventilated.
- Investigate and manage any temperature excursions, including quarantining affected stock where appropriate.
- Follow SPS guidance on assessing medicines exposed to high temperatures.

Further guidance and practical resources are available from the [SPS Temperature management for medicines storage](#) hub ([free registration required](#)).

Patient advice

Advise patients to store medicines as directed on the label or in the patient information leaflet, keep them away from direct sunlight and heat, and seek advice from their pharmacist if they are concerned that medicines have been exposed to excessive temperatures.

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

5. 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.

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

The Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation team thanks practices 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.

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

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

7. Pharmacy First Dashboard – Available for access

Practices are reminded that the NEL GP Referral activity for Minor Illness and Clinical Pathways (Pharmacy First) Power BI Dashboard is available to all North East London (NEL) practices and Primary Care Networks (PCNs).

The dashboard provides an overview of Pharmacy First referral activity across NEL, including:

- Referral volumes at place, PCN and practice level
- Completion and rejection rates, including reasons for rejected referrals
- Insights to support local quality improvement and collaborative working with community pharmacies

Why use the dashboard?

The dashboard can help practices to:

- **Support strategic planning** by identifying opportunities and maximising the use of Pharmacy First.
- **Share learning** by comparing referral activity and successful approaches across practices and PCNs.
- **Drive improvement** using data to identify areas where referral activity could be increased and targeted support may be beneficial.

Accessing the dashboard

To access the dashboard, please follow the instructions available on the [Pharmacy First webpage](#)

8. DOAC Webinar Recordings Now Available

For practice staff that were unable to attend the DOAC webinar, recordings of the two-part **Initiating and Monitoring DOACs in Non-Valvular Atrial Fibrillation (NVAf) in Primary Care** webinar series are now available to watch.

The webinars were hosted by NEL ICB and delivered by Barts Health.

- Part 1: <https://youtu.be/duS1FH9MrxQ>
- Part 2: <https://youtu.be/Gd7PW1jYaCU>

These sessions provide practical guidance to support primary care clinicians with the initiation and ongoing monitoring of direct oral anticoagulants (DOACs) for patients with NVAf.

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:

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