



Summary of key changes to the Public Health pharmacy services 2025-26

Claire Jones, Public Health Pharmacy Adviser. January 2025. claire.jones2@durham.gov.uk

Public Health pharmacy services directly commissioned by Durham County Council

Summary of next steps

General

Be aware that:

Flu vaccination: The council will again be commissioning a council staff flu vaccination service 2025-26. A further contract variation letter will follow over the summer for the service starting 1 October 2025 for council employees (including council-maintained schools).

NEW regional varenicline PGD supply service: When available, please sign up to provide this important new service which is being commissioned by PSNE on behalf of the 12 local authorities in the North-East in 2025 (Appendix 1 for further copy briefing circulated by CPNEC).

January 2025

Consider the contract variation letter and accompanying service specifications.

Please particularly consider the provision of the naloxone (Prenoxad) supply service.

February 2025

Be aware that the NRT formulary choices for lozenges will increase from 1 April 2025.

Consider training requirements in the service specifications (Note: Unchanged from 2024-25.

Local training materials can be accessed at <https://www.cpneec.org.uk/lpc-events/durham-training/>).

March 2025

Sign and return the contract variation letter by Friday 28 March 2025.

April 2025

From 1 April 2025, the formulary choices of NRT lozenges will increase.

Public Health pharmacy contract

What's new?

- The contract variation letter should be signed and returned to confirm acceptance of the service specifications and an indication of which services the pharmacy intends to deliver in 2025-26 by a deadline of 28 March 2025.¹

What stays the same?

- All pharmacies have signed up to the Public Health pharmacy service contract which covers the period 2022-25.
- Annual extensions are built into this contract, hence contractors will be asked to again sign a contract variation letter for the updated 2025-26 pharmacy service specifications of:
 1. Alcohol brief intervention service
 2. Supervised consumption service
 3. Naloxone (Prenoxad) supply service
 4. NRT e-voucher service
- All communication from the commissioning team will continue to be via email to either the appropriate head office contact or the pharmacy shared NHS mailbox.

¹ Email: AHS.Commissioning@durham.gov.uk.

Lead officer: Karen Kennedy, Commissioning Officer. Email: karen.kennedy@durham.gov.uk



The naloxone (Prenoxad) supply service

What's new?

- In December 2024, legislation enabling pharmacy professionals to supply take-home naloxone came into force.² This is in addition to the previous exemptions in the Human Medicines Regulations which allow drug treatment services to supply take-home naloxone without a prescription for the purposes of saving a life in an emergency.³
- With the increasing use of potent synthetic opioids being implicated in opioid drug deaths,⁴ it is vitally important that naloxone becomes available from as many locations as possible. Please re-consider this important service for 2025-26 and see Appendix 2 for further information.

What stays the same?

- The service lead can continue to be a registered pharmacy technician, and any trained member of the pharmacy team can issue Prenoxad.
- All mandated training is online. Non-mandated training continues to be available on the CPNEC website at <https://www.cpnec.org.uk/lpc-events/durham-training/> which describes how to interact with clients and how to run a successful service.
- There continues to be a one-off set-up fee to include the initial cost of the minimum stock level of two Prenoxad injections, which will be paid on completion of a separate PharmOutcomes template.
- The person receiving the supply of Prenoxad resides in County Durham, is aged 18 and over, and is either an individual currently, or with a history of, using opioids; or is a carer, family member, or friend liable to be on hand in case of overdose.
- The PharmOutcomes template has minimal data recording requirements, similar to a needle exchange intervention.
- The supply fee is £8 ex VAT.

Supervised consumption service

What's new?

- It's very important that the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service is aware of the usual days of the week that a pharmacy provides the supervised consumption service. The client Pharmacy Treatment Agreement has been amended so that all parties are aware on what days a supervised consumption service is normally available. When Agreements are received by the pharmacy, please check that the Recovery Service has indicated the correct days of the week on which the supervised consumption service is normally available and inform the Recovery Service of any changes.

What stays the same?

- Registered pharmacy technicians can continue to provide the supervised consumption service.
- The fee per supervision remains the same at £2.50 ex VAT for a methadone supervision and £3.50 ex VAT for a buprenorphine supervision, and is per client supervision (i.e. one supervision claim per client visit to the pharmacy).
- Additional fees continue to be:

² <https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/news/legislation-enabling-pharmacy-professionals-to-supply-take-home-naloxone-comes-into-force>; <https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/news/pharmacists-and-pharmacy-technicians-to-be-able-to-supply-naloxone-without-a-prescription>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/widening-the-availability-of-naloxone/widening-the-availability-of-naloxone>

⁴ <https://cpe.org.uk/our-news/national-patient-safety-alert-potent-synthetic-opioids-implicated-in-heroin-overdoses-and-deaths/>



- £8 ex VAT for accepting a new client (classed as 'new' to the pharmacy after a period of 3 months).
- £4 ex VAT for completion of the *Supervised Consumption - Missed 3 or more dose notification* template to inform the Recovery Service that a client has missed 3 or more days of medication.
- All daily doses of take-home methadone to continue to be dispensed in separate containers.
- As part of contingency planning, pharmacies are required to:
 1. Inform the local Recovery Centre in the event of a pharmacy service disruption so that arrangements can be made with clients.
 2. Ask all clients for their current telephone numbers once a month to aid with contacting clients during any periods of service disruption.
 3. Inform the Recovery Centre if the pharmacy is reaching its capacity for a safe client list to see if any arrangements can be made to mitigate this.
- The mandatory training requirement for the lead pharmacist continues to be completion of the CPPE DoC for supervised consumption of prescribed medicines every 2 years. Non-mandated training materials continue to be available at <https://www.cpnec.org.uk/lpc-events/durham-training/>.

Alcohol brief intervention service

What stays the same?

- The service, service declaration on PharmOutcomes, training requirements and remuneration for the service remain the same (£7.50 ex VAT for a full AUDIT).
- The mandated Annual Update Briefing continues to be available at <https://www.cpnec.org.uk/lpc-events/durham-training/>.
- Continue to consider this service as a valuable addition to other pharmacy services e.g. the NHS Blood Pressure Check Service, the New Medicine Service or the local Emergency Oral Hormonal Contraception Service.
- For pharmacies wishing to provide this service, complete the required training and then contact Sandra Waters (email: sandra.waters@nhs.net) for an onsite visit and service materials.

NRT e-voucher scheme

What's new?

- From 1 April 2025, the NRT formulary choices of lozenges will increase to also include: Nicorette Fruit 2mg Lozenges (x80), Niquitin Mint 2mg Lozenges (x72), and Niquitin Mint 4mg Lozenges (x72). See service specification for full formulary listing.

What stays the same?

- Two NRT products (i.e. combination therapy) are provided to clients free of charge.
- Pharmacy staff are not required to undergo named training to meet this specification.
- The Stop Smoking Service will continue to issue NRT e-voucher codes for a 2-week supply of NRT which should be supplied in full by the pharmacy each time via PharmOutcomes.
- NRT quantities supplied must continue to be entered as the total number of individual units (e.g. mls or patches or cartridges) and NOT the number of packs (e.g. 1 bottle or 1 pack).
- The pharmacy can continue to alter the choice of NRT product without a new e-voucher.
- The remuneration for the service stays the same as:
 - Acceptance fee for each 2-weekly e-voucher of £3.00 ex VAT.
 - Dispensing fee for each NRT product of £1.20 ex VAT.
 - NRT Drug Tariff product cost.



Contacts for public health pharmacy services commissioned on behalf of Durham County Council

To discuss recruitment, contract sign-up, payment, and all service implications:

Sexual health services (EOHC provision, C card, Chlamydia screening)

These County Durham services are commissioned by the County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust.

Contact: Sandra Waters, Sexual Health Improvement Project Officer, Sexual Health Service.

Email: sandra.waters@nhs.net

Website: <https://cddft.nhs.uk/our-services/division-of-women,-children-and-sexual-health/sexual-health-services.aspx>

Level 2 stop smoking service

This County Durham service is commissioned by ABL Health Ltd.

Contact: Dawn Cockburn, Stop smoking Practitioner/Level 2 service Lead– Smokefree County Durham.

Email: dcockburn@ablhealth.co.uk (or Smokefreelife.countydurham@nhs.net)

Website: www.smokefreecountydurham.co.uk/

Needle exchange

This County Durham service is commissioned by Waythrough.

Contact: Katie Fowler, Harm Reduction and Rough Sleeper Lead Practitioner, County Durham Drug & Alcohol Recovery Service

Email: katie.fowler@waythrough.org.uk (or cddars.clinicaladmin@spectrum-cic.nhs.uk)

Website: <https://codurhamdrugalcoholrecovery.co.uk/>

Forthcoming regional PGD supply service for varenicline

This North-East regional service will be commissioned by PSNE in 2025.

Contact: Ann Gunning, Head of Services and Support, Community Pharmacy North of Tyne

Email: ann.gunning@northoftynelpc.com (or <https://www.psne.co.uk/contact-us.html>)

Website: <https://www.psne.co.uk/about-us.html>



Appendix 1: UPDATE: Stop smoking medication: generic varenicline and cytisine

Information for community pharmacies in County Durham. December 2024

Key points

As you'll be aware, both cytisine (<https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/category/cytisine>) and some generic brands of varenicline (<https://www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/generic-varenicline>) are now available.

The NENC ICS formulary section on nicotine dependence at <https://www.northeastnorthcumbriaformulary.nhs.uk/chaptersSubDetails.asp?FormularySectionID=4&SubSectionRef=04.10.02&SubSectionID=A100> will be updated to describe how to signpost to stop smoking services in each local authority and to describe the provision of NRT by these services.

This update will also include the following statement: *For cytisine and generic varenicline the medium-term intention is for all stop smoking services to supply (either via prescribing or PGD). However, in the short term, GP practices may get requests to prescribe these medications with ongoing monitoring and support being provided by the stop smoking services as part of a quit attempt.*

Local authorities in the North-East are working together to implement a regional community pharmacy PGD supply service for generic varenicline and cytisine. This will be available in 2025 for the supply of generic varenicline in the first instance.

The service will be available to all pharmacies in the North-East to provide, and to stop smoking services to utilise to support client quit attempts with these medicines. This pharmacy service is necessary since most of the stop smoking services do not have direct access to prescribers to support the supply of POMs.

In the meantime, Smokefree County Durham <https://www.smokefreecountydurham.co.uk/> will not routinely approach GP practices to prescribe these medicines and will wait until the regional pharmacy supply service is in place.

For enquiries from the public, please advise that supplying generic varenicline as part of a quit attempt with the stop smoking service will be available in 2025 and that a waiting list is available with this service.

Contact details for Smokefree County Durham are:

-Tel: 0800 772 0565

-Email: smokefreelife.countydurham@nhs.net

-Online referral: <https://www.smokefreecountydurham.co.uk/professional-referral/>

Smokefree County Durham will continue to support clients with free NRT and vapes.

Background information

Local authorities in the North-East are working together to implement a regional community pharmacy PGD supply service for generic varenicline and cytisine. This will be available in 2025 for the supply of generic varenicline in the first instance and key features will be:

- This service will be managed by PSNE on behalf of a lead local authority in the region.
- An e-recommendation to supply will be sent from a stop smoking adviser via PharmOutcomes (in a similar way to the NENC ICS maternity e-NRT voucher service at <https://www.cpnec.org.uk/locally-commissioned-services/integrated-care-system-services/>).
- Pharmacies will work under PGD (using an adapted national PGD from SPS for generic varenicline at <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/home/guidance/patient-group-directions/templates/>) to make the final clinical decision to supply.
- Pharmacy fees will include an initial clinical assessment fee of £12.50 for a week 1-2 supply, and a dispensing fee of £2.50 for each 2-weekly supply.

Note: Publication of the national SPS PGD for cytisine has been delayed awaiting publication of updated NICE guidance. As a result, the decision has been taken to implement a phased approach and to launch the regional pharmacy PGD supply service for varenicline in the first instance, and to then consider the provision of cytisine via this service once the national cytisine PGD becomes available.



Appendix 2: UPDATE: Summary briefing: Pharmacy naloxone supply service

Claire Jones, Public Health Pharmacy Adviser. December 2024.

The aim of this briefing is to describe the importance of the pharmacy naloxone (Prenoxad) supply service in County Durham, and how this service has been remodelled to make it a much quicker intervention for pharmacies also providing the supervised consumption and/or needle exchange services.

Why is this service so important in County Durham?

- Opioid-related deaths make up the largest proportion of drug-related deaths across the UK, with an average of 40 deaths per week.
- Opioids were involved in 73% of drug misuse deaths registered in England in 2022, and the North-East of England continues to have the highest rate of drug misuse deaths.
- Naloxone can almost immediately and temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, and therefore prevent drug-related deaths by reversing breathing difficulties.
- Naloxone supply is therefore a critical intervention, particularly with the increasing use of potent synthetic opioids.⁵

What is the legislation?

Naloxone injection (Prenoxad) is a POM, however following legislative changes:

In 2015: It can be supplied without a prescription by persons engaged in the provision of drug treatment services (e.g. on behalf of a local authority) for the purposes of saving life in an emergency.⁶

In 2024: In December 2024, legislation enabling pharmacy professionals to supply take-home naloxone came into force.⁷ This is in addition to the 2015 exemptions in the Human Medicines Regulations which allow drug treatment services to supply take-home naloxone without a prescription for the purposes of saving life in an emergency.

In County Durham **this commissioned service will pay a supply fee of £8 exVAT (plus drug cost) for each supply made**, and any trained member of the pharmacy team can make these supplies.

This service has been remodelled to make it a much quicker intervention (with minimal data recording requirements) based on the lessons learnt from successful pharmacy services elsewhere.

⁵ <https://cpe.org.uk/our-news/national-patient-safety-alert-potent-synthetic-opioids-implicated-in-heroin-overdoses-and-deaths/>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/widening-the-availability-of-naloxone/widening-the-availability-of-naloxone>

⁷ <https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/news/legislation-enabling-pharmacy-professionals-to-supply-take-home-naloxone-comes-into-force>; <https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/news/pharmacists-and-pharmacy-technicians-to-be-able-to-supply-naloxone-without-a-prescription>



To provide this important service

(SLA at <https://www.cpnec.org.uk/county-durham-services-2/>)

Staff

- The service lead can either be a pharmacist or a registered pharmacy technician.
- Any trained member of the pharmacy team can supply Prenoxad.

Training

- All mandated training is online.

Resources

- The pharmacy should stock Prenoxad injection with a minimum stock level of two.
- The pharmacy should have supplies or signpost to the *Prenoxad Injection Clients Guide*.⁸

Providing the service

- This should be considered as an add-on service for pharmacies providing the supervised consumption and/or the needle exchange service.
- The person receiving the supply of Prenoxad should be a County Durham resident, aged 18 and over, and either be the individual currently, or with a history of, using opioids; or be a carer, family member, or friend liable to be on hand in case of overdose.
- The PharmOutcomes claims template has minimal data recording requirements described in Appendix 2 of the SLA.

Getting started

Claim the one-off set-up fee on PharmOutcomes which includes the initial cost of the minimum stock level of two Prenoxad injections.

Once the online mandated training is complete, view the non-mandated 30-minute training video at <https://www.cpnec.org.uk/drug-and-alcohol/> from Dr Jenny Scott, who has been involved in pharmacy supply services elsewhere.⁹ This video describes how to run a successful pharmacy supply service.

Consider the top tips for supply in Appendix 1 of the SLA.

Contact the Public Health Pharmacy Adviser (Claire.jones2@durham.gov.uk) if staff would value a visit from a Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service Ambassador, who will advise on how best to approach making Prenoxad supplies.

⁸ <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/3054/rmms>

⁹ <https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/opinion/how-we-became-the-top-naloxone-supplying-pharmacy-in-the-country>
<https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/news/community-pharmacy-pilot-provides-hundreds-of-take-home-naloxone-kits-in-one-year>