

**** IMPORTANT ****

Closure of medicine question mailbox

The medicine.question@nhsdorset.nhs.uk mailbox will no longer be supported from the 15th April 2026, due to ICB staffing reductions. For queries related to:

- medicines commissioning decisions
- medicines commissioning policies and contracting

please contact commissioning.medicines@nhsdorset.nhs.uk.

For clinical queries about individual patients, primary care-based healthcare professionals can use Specialist Pharmacy Service medicines advice service via 0300 770 8564 / asksp.s.nhs@sps.direct. (Staff in Dorset NHS Trusts should seek advice from their pharmacy teams).

All other related ICB queries please contact customercareteam@nhsdorset.nhs.uk.

This newsletter will be sent bimonthly

Due to upcoming staffing reductions in the Medicines Team, this newsletter will be reduced to being published bi-monthly from now on. It will also be more focussed on medicines related commissioning decisions and policies.

Coroner highlights lack of head injury warnings for anticoagulant

A coroner has warned in a Prevention of Future Deaths report that patient information leaflets for the anticoagulant apixaban do not “expressly address” steps patients should take if they sustain a head injury.

After a review of apixaban patient information leaflets, the coroner noted that while patients are advised not to take apixaban if they are bleeding excessively and to seek medical advice if they are at ‘increased risk of bleeding’, patient information leaflets do not address what to do if a patient sustains trauma to the head.

The MHRA and ABPI have 56 days to respond to the report. In the meantime, we encourage healthcare professionals to opportunistically advise patients on the need to seek help after a head injury if they are prescribed any anticoagulant drugs.

Read the Prevention of Future Deaths report in full on the [Courts and Tribunals Judiciary website](#).

Updated position statement on labelling liquid medicines for children

The Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacy Group NPPG have published v2 of their position statement ‘[Labelling of Dispensed Oral Medicines for Children](#)’, which supersedes the first edition published in June 2025. The updates can be summarised as follows:

- The recommendation to express the dose of oral liquid medicines in terms of millilitres (mL) is unchanged. However, a note has been added to state that the dose can be expressed in terms of “spoonfuls”, provided that the volume of the spoonful is also specified on the label e.g. “....5mL spoonful”.
- A statement has been added to confirm that expressing the dose to be given as a number of drops is also acceptable where the product is designed to be used in this way.

Simvastatin 80mg

A reminder that Simvastatin 80mg is associated with an increased risk of myopathy. Currently, there are still patients in the Dorset area prescribed this dose of simvastatin. The [NHSE Lipid Management Guidance](#) (primary and secondary prevention) states “Simvastatin 80mg is not recommended due to risk of muscle toxicity”. Please review affected patients in line with this guidance.

Isotretinoin – changes to prescribing guidance and risk minimisation measures

Following the review of the impact of the 2023 risk minimisation measures for isotretinoin, the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) has recommended an updated approach to the prescribing requirements for isotretinoin. From 22/01/2026, isotretinoin can be prescribed to those under 18-years old without the agreement of a second prescriber. However, additional risk minimisation measures have been introduced to ensure isotretinoin continues to be prescribed and dispensed safely and all other existing risk minimisation measures continue to remain in place. For more information, please refer to the [full article in the MHRA Drug Safety Update](#) for January 2026.

Corticosteroid inhalers – please prescribe by brand

A quick reminder to prescribe corticosteroid-containing inhalers by brand. This is because when prescribed generically, multiple devices could be supplied against the generic description. As an example, if the patient is prescribed Budesonide & formoterol 200mcg/6mcg dry powder inhaler generically, the community pharmacy's PMR system allows them to dispense any of the following:

- Symbicort 200mcg/6mcg Turbohaler, or
- Fobumix 160mcg/4.5mcg Easyhaler, or
- WockAIR 160mcg/4.5mcg inhaler.

Whilst these strengths are equivalent, they are all different devices, and this can lead to confusion between what the prescribing clinician explains to the patient and what the patient receives from the pharmacy. Therefore, prescribing the intended device by brand ensures the patient always receives the same device.

Closedown on the Independent Prescribing Pathfinder Pilot

Over the last year, Dorset ICB has supported the delivery of the NHSE commissioned Independent Prescribing Pathfinder Pilot (IPPP) across 4 community pharmacy pilot sites. The clinical model – minor illness – was chosen to expand on the existing Pharmacy First service, to further reduce pressures on primary care and urgent care services and to support 'left shift' working.

NHSE funding for the pilot finished on 31st December 2025. However, due to very positive feedback, the ICB continued to fund the service up until 31st March 2026, when the publication of an NHSE prescribing strategy was anticipated. Unfortunately, strategy publication has been delayed and is now unlikely to be released until at least October 2026.

As a result, the IPPP service across Dorset will **finish on the 31st of March 2026**. IPPP pilot sites will revert to providing the Pharmacy First service for minor illness referrals from 1st April 2026 in line with the national contract. All other community pharmacy services remain unaffected. Please continue to refer patients to your local community pharmacies via the existing Pharmacy First pathways.

Drug shortages/supply issues

- The SSP for Creon® 25000 gastro-resistant capsules (SSP061), due to expire 30 January 2026, has been further extended to Friday 17 April 2026. Please continue to follow the [locally agreed shortage guidance](#) as well as [other information available on the formulary](#).

Quick bites

- The Dorset Formulary is available at: www.dorsetformulary.nhs.uk.
- Recently published 'SPS Spotlight' includes case studies of SMR in problematic polypharmacy and diabetes. Also available is a [SPS Medication Safety Update](#), summarizing recent safety updates.
- Pneumococcal vaccination for older adults and for individuals in a clinical risk group: [Information for healthcare practitioners](#)
- [Community Pharmacy Oral Contraceptive Service](#) – updated guidance for GP practices.