

Position statement on the prescribing of medicines for dental and oral conditions

Following the NHS England guidance 'Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs' (March 2018) the following changes to prescribing have been agreed across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge.

From 9 November 2021
North East London Clinical Commissioning Group (NEL CCG),
Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Integrated Care
Partnership (BHR ICP) no longer supports the prescribing of
medicines used for dental and oral conditions.

Decision

The decision to stop the short term prescribing for dental and oral conditions applies to ALL patients across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge unless the patient falls into the exception below.

GPs should not accept requests from dentists to prescribe medicines that the dentist could reasonably prescribe themselves.

Medicines prescribed for dental and oral health include toothpastes, mouthwashes, teething gel and treatments for dry mouth.

If symptoms are not improving or responding to treatment, then patients should be encouraged to seek further advice from a pharmacy, NHS app, NHS website or NHS 111. 'Red flag' symptoms should be referred and treated appropriately.

For care home patients: access to treatment should be considered via a care home policy.

Exceptions

NEL CCG BHR ICP have agreed exceptions to this recommendation, where they accept that prescribing should continue in primary care for:

- GPs are still permitted to prescribe where it was an important part of the care they were providing for a patient e.g. fluoride toothpaste for cancer patients

This decision was made because:

- NEL CCG BHR ICP believes dentists can and should prescribe medicines for dental and oral conditions, where appropriate. Involving GPs in prescribing for these conditions is usually unnecessary, and uses valuable appointments and GP time
- Many medicines used for dental and oral conditions are readily available for purchase in community pharmacies, supermarkets and many other retail stores, without the need for a prescription. If the patient wishes to use these then they can be sign-posted to pharmacies for further advice, where appropriate
- NEL CCG BHR ICP have a duty to spend taxpayer's money wisely, to make sure they get the best value possible – especially when NHS funding is being severely squeezed and more patients are being seen with more complex health issues than ever before

References

1. NHS England and NHS Clinical Commissioners. Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs, March 2018. Publishing approval reference 07851
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-guidance-for-CCGs/>