

## **Position statement on the prescribing of gluten free foods**

Following the local Spending NHS Money Wisely public consultation, the Governing Bodies of the BHR CCGs met in common on 29th June 2017 to agree changes to prescribing across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge.

**From 10th July 2017  
Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical  
Commissioning Groups (BHR CCGs) no longer supports the  
prescribing of any gluten-free food products.**

### **Decision**

The decision to stop prescribing all gluten-free food products applies to ALL patients across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge. BHR CCGs have agreed NO exceptions to this recommendation.

### **This decision was made because:**

- It is possible to eat a healthy, balanced gluten free diet without the need for specialist dietary foods
- All major supermarkets and many other retailers commonly stock gluten free foods at a lower cost to the public than if it was provided by the NHS
- Improved food labelling now means that people are able to see if foods are free from gluten and can be safely eaten
- BHR CCGs 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

### **What if patients cannot afford to pay for gluten free substitute foods?**

Naturally gluten free foods such as rice and potatoes are widely available at low cost. It is recognised that gluten free foods can be more expensive than other foods, although the price difference is less than it was in the past. This is thought to be due to the increasing demand for such products, with more people choosing to follow a gluten free diet and more engagement from supermarkets and manufacturers in this sector.

### **Other useful resources**

The Coeliac UK website [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk) contains lots of useful information on how to follow a gluten free diet, including advice on shopping and reading food labels, cooking and baking, eating out, travelling and specific advice for children and for those eating on a budget.