

January 2026 Volume 5 Issue 1



**Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire
and Berkshire West**
Integrated Care Board

BOB Medicines Optimisation Bulletin



This bi-monthly newsletter is written by the Medicines Optimisation Team of the BOB Integrated Care Board and is intended for healthcare professionals and practice staff. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact the team via the email address: bobicb.medicines@nhs.net

Past editions of the bulletin can be found on the [SharePoint](#) website.

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National updates

Move from *Signposting* to *Digital Referral* for additional NHS 111 referrals to Pharmacy First

From Wednesday 10 December 2025, NHS 111 telephone service is now electronically referring patients to a community pharmacy of their choice for additional Pharmacy First minor illness clinical condition groups. This will replace signposting for those conditions and will allow pharmacy teams to see these referrals directly in clinical systems.

What is changing?

- The NHS Pathways algorithms that underpin NHS 111 triage and clinical assessment generate **two** pharmacy specific disposition codes, (**Dx28** (Contact Pharmacist within 24 hours) and **Dx29** (Contact Pharmacist next working day)) that **are now enabled** for digital referral by utilising the **Pharmacy First (PF)** profiles in DoS
- **Only pharmacies registered to deliver the Pharmacy First Service** will receive digital referrals for **Dx28/Dx29**
- **Pharmacies not registered for Pharmacy First** will no longer appear on the list of pharmacies offered to the patient; however, patients directed to community pharmacy via informal signposts must continue to be treated and supported as part of community pharmacy **Essential Service** delivery – this has not changed.

Pneumococcal Vaccine Change

A bipartite letter has been published outlining a change in vaccine from PPV23 to PCV20 for the pneumococcal vaccination programme: [Change of vaccine for the routine adult pneumococcal vaccination programme and individuals at increased clinical risk - GOV.UK](#).

Providers are asked to read the bipartite letter and to be aware that a change in the pneumococcal vaccine will take place January – early February 2026, for those cohorts outlined in the letter.

Food Standards Agency - Nestlé recalls several SMA Infant Formula and Follow-On Formula as

a precaution because of the possible presence of cereulide (toxin)

Nestlé has taken the precautionary step of recalling several SMA Infant Formula and Follow-On Formula because they may contain cereulide toxin.

The full alert is published on the Food Standards Agency website at the link below:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/alert/fsa-prin-02-2026>

For any enquiries please contact the Food Standards Agency:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/contact/consumers/find-details>

Please note, the products mentioned in the Food Standards Agency alert are regulated under UK Food Law, and includes food for special medical purposes. These products are not regulated by the Medicines and Healthcare products regulatory Agency (MHRA). Food for special medicinal purposes is used to manage the diets of people with certain diseases, disorders or medical conditions. These special foods are intended for people whose nutritional requirements cannot be met by normal foods and they are to be used under the supervision of an appropriate healthcare professional.

Drug Safety Update: Rybelsus[®] (semaglutide tablets) transition to new formulation and risk of medication error

The MHRA have published a [drug safety update](#) regarding the risk of patient harm arising through medication error during a transition period where the original and new formulation of Rybelsus[®] (semaglutide) tablets.

The new formulation of Rybelsus[®] has increased bioavailability therefore lower strength tablets achieve the same drug exposure and clinical effect as the previous formulation.

The two formulations will temporarily co-exist on the market until approximately 31st January 2026 however, original formulation stock of imported Rybelsus[®] may be within supply chains beyond this date.

See the full [Drug Safety Update](#) for further information and advice.



BOB System updates



Updates from Area Prescribing Committee

Penicillamine Prescribing

Penicillamine, for use in rheumatology, now has a red formulary status (i.e. secondary care prescribing) in all three areas across BOB. In September, BOB APC approved the removal of the shared care protocol in Buckinghamshire to align to a red formulary status across BOB (with the formulary statuses in Oxfordshire and Berkshire West being red already). ePACT data shows that there is some prescribing in primary care across BOB and the Medicines Optimisation Team will be contacting individual practices to draw their attention to this.

So what?

- **Please identify if your practice is prescribing penicillamine:**
- If prescribing penicillamine following a request from a local rheumatology specialist, please contact the specialist and arrange for prescribing to be handed back to secondary care.
- If prescribing penicillamine following a request from an out of area rheumatology specialist, please ensure there is an up-to-date shared care protocol in place being adhered to, to ensure it is being prescribed safely, as per [BOB ICB Shared Care Protocol \(SCP\) Best Practice Guidance](#).

Prescribing Quality Scheme

PQS – Dietetic Target

Alongside the BOB dashboards emailed monthly, practices can see in more detail their progress towards the PQS Dietetic Target on our PQS GP ONS Dashboard. Prescribing from July 2025 onwards is measured. We acknowledge practices have concerns where they have patients they are not able to switch/stop their non-preferred oral nutritional supplement (ONS). The 30% target should allow for a proportion of patients who can't or decline to change their ONS. However, we have now uploaded a spreadsheet to Sharepoint that you can consider using to document these patients for the appeals process, if the target will not be achieved.

So what?

- Keep a record of patients whose ONS prescriptions must remain on non-preferred ONS [Dietetic target PQS 2025 Evidence Return Form for appeals.xlsx](#)
- See your progress on the PQS Dietetic target via the [dashboard](#)

ScriptSwitch Insights

Winter Top Offered Switches

Original Product	Replacement product	Did you know?
Salbutamol 100micrograms/dose inhaler CFC free	Salamol 100micrograms/dose inhaler CFC free	This switch was previously introduced but temporarily paused due to national stock issues. With supply now stabilised, it is active once again. As we head into the winter season, we traditionally see an increase in SABA prescribing to support patients with respiratory tract infections. Choosing Salamol as the preferred option not only helps maintain consistency with BOB ICB preferred choices, but also supports reduced overall ScriptSwitch offer rates.
Colecalciferol 800unit capsules	Strivit 800unit capsules	Vitamin D prescribing tends to increase in the winter. Strivit is the preferred brand across BOB.
Amoxicillin 500mg capsules Doxycycline 100mg capsules	Amoxicillin 500mg capsules 5 day course length i.e. 15 capsules Doxycycline 100mg capsules 5 day course length i.e. 6 capsules	Antibiotic prescribing increases during the winter months. National guidelines recommend that a 5-day course of treatment is appropriate for the majority of cases. Ensure that 5-day courses are selected where appropriate.

During the winter period, we've seen a slight increase in ScriptSwitch offer rates across BOB. Although several new switches have been added/reinstated to the profile during this period, our data review shows that these additions are *not* the reason for the rise.

Instead, the increase appears to be driven by other commonly prescribed items, particularly those impacted by winter pressures.

As always, please aim to prescribe the recommended **replacement product** where clinically appropriate. This helps maintain consistency with BOB preferred choices and supports more efficient medicines optimisation during the busy winter months.

Thank you for your continued support in keeping prescribing aligned and effective.

So what?

- Share these switches at the next practice/clinical meeting to ensure the **replacement product** is prescribed in the **first** Providing a print out has proven useful in reducing the offer rate.
- There is usually an increase in locums working during this winter period due to annual leave and sickness, so ensuring they have a copy to hand is particularly useful.
- Ensure all locums have access to a ScriptSwitch user profile.

Dietetic Updates

ONS Webinars

Catch up on our latest dietitian led webinars on appropriate prescribing of ONS.

The next lunch and learn webinar on appropriate prescribing of ONS will be on **Tuesday 27th January at 1pm**. The topic will be on nutrition for dysphagia specific ONS and food first.

You can catch up on recordings of historic webinars on Sharepoint.

Topics include: Dementia, Care

Homes, End of life, substance misuse and pressure ulcers, as well as general tips on appropriate prescribing of ONS.

So what?

- Email bobicb.medicines@nhs.net to be invited to the webinars
- Catch up on recordings on [Sharepoint.](#)

New Nutrition Guidance for infants

BOB ICB has a new Infant Nutrition Formulary including guidance for pre-term and/or low birthweight infants and the use of pre-term feeds, post-discharge from formula, and human milk fortifier for breast-fed pre-term infants. The recommending clinician (dietitian / paediatrician / neonate team) should advise the GP on quantity and duration of these infant nutrition products.

So what?

- Prescription requests should now align with the [BOB ICB Infant Nutrition Formulary](#) And the [guide on the use of formulas and fortifiers for pre term and low birth weight infants](#)

Training, upcoming meeting and Resources

Reminder: Care Home malnutrition training and change in position on ONS prescribing

Our Care Home sessions are in full swing, with individuals from nearly 100 homes trained so far. There are still slots for other care home staff to sign up – please share the poster with your care homes and invite them to attend. We have had some GPs attend as well and you are also more than welcome!

Oral Nutrition Supplement prescribing is no longer supported for residents of care homes other than in exceptional circumstances where specific criteria are met.

So what?

- Sign up/ share the link for Malnutrition Care Home Training [Care Home Malnutrition Training Poster](#). [Registration Form](#)
- Familiarise with the [Position Statement for using ONS in care homes](#), and do not prescribe ONS unless the criteria are met.
- Recommend Care homes follow the Malnutrition Management pathway for residents at risk of malnutrition.

Let's Talk About Vaccines - BOB ICB training

Are you interested in building your discussion skills around vaccine hesitancy?

Let's Talk About Vaccines (LTaV) is a FREE 2.5 hour training session to help build your **confidence, skills and knowledge** to open up discussions and help people make informed choices about vaccine decisions.

This online, interactive session is **free to health, social care and voluntary sector staff and students working in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West and Frimley.**

"It has improved my ability to discuss vaccinations and keep an open mind."

"The training made me more aware of the importance of effective communication ... I am now more mindful of how I interact with patients and the more positive the interaction, the better the outcome."

- Comments from learners

The training is provided by Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB. Two sessions are scheduled and available to book on 12 February and 12 March 2026. Find out more and sign up on [the BOB ICB website – Let's Talk About Vaccines training](#).

Respiratory Information and Resources

The BOB Integrated Respiratory Delivery Network (IRDN) have created a webpage on SharePoint to host respiratory resources to support your management of people with respiratory conditions. For the latest information from BOB IRDN, please see the newsletters on this [link](#).

Diabetes Information and Resources

The BOB Integrated Diabetes Delivery Network (IDDN) have created a webpage on SharePoint to host diabetes resources relating to pathways and guidance to support your management of people with diabetes. For the latest information from BOB IDDN, please see the newsletters on this [link](#).



Other news and information



Medicines Supply Information

Some information on long-term supply issues can be found on [Prescqiipp](#) or the [Medicines Supply Tool](#) on the SPS website. Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

Serious Shortage Protocols

Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs), which enable community pharmacists to supply patients with specific alternative medicines, are available to view on the NHS Business Service Authority (BSA)'s [dedicated SSP web page](#), along with supporting guidance. Questions regarding the SSPs should be directed to the NHS Prescription Service:

Email: nhsbsa.prescriptionservices@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

Telephone: 0300 330 1349. Textphone: 18001 0300 330 1349

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