

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICINES MANAGEMENT Newsletter

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Pharmacies are here to help you 'Stay well this winter'

The latest *Living Well* campaign 'Stay well this winter' encourages the public to plan ahead for winter, adopt positive self-care measures, and seek advice from their local pharmacy when needed.

Running across more than 500 pharmacies in Northern Ireland during October and November 2026, the campaign highlights the important role community pharmacies play in supporting patients throughout the winter months.

The campaign focuses on a range of seasonal health topics, including the management of common winter illnesses, self-care advice, and information about winter vaccinations. Patients are encouraged to visit their local pharmacy for further information, including picking up a free 'Stay well this winter' leaflet.

Further information, campaign resources, and evaluation reports from previous *Living Well* campaigns are available on the Living Well [webpage](#).



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Image by [Magnific](#)

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NICE Guidance Recently published:

[NICE TA1189](#)
[NICE TA1190](#)
[NICE TA1192](#)
[NICE TA1193](#)
[NICE TA1194](#)
[NICE TA1195](#)
[NICE TA1197](#)

NOT recommended:
[NICE TA1191](#)

MHRA reviewing risks and safeguards for propranolol use in anxiety



Image by [Magnific](#)

In July and September 2026, the Royal College of Pharmacy (RCPharm) and the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) Medicines Safety Joint Working Group, along with the National Poisons Information Service, urged the MHRA to update the Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) for propranolol. The colleges have asked the regulator to consider removing its licensed indication for generalised anxiety and to strengthen warnings around overdose, self-harm, and suicide.

[NICE](#) guidance on the treatment of anxiety and wider guidance on common mental health problems does not refer to propranolol or how and when it may be used in practice to treat patients with these symptoms.

There is currently a shortage of propranolol MR 80mg and 160mg. Therefore this may provide an opportunity to review patients and consider alternative treatments.

Actions

- Patients should be regularly reviewed to consider step down, avoiding abrupt withdrawal
- Consider adding alerts to the GP clinical system to encourage review of patients on propranolol
- Do not initiate propranolol for the treatment of anxiety for new patients.

Managed Entry decisions:

- Trastuzumab deruxtecan (Enhertu®)
- Glycopyrronium bromide (Akhdrox®) cream
- Finerenone (Kerendia®)
- Pirtobrutinib (Jaypirca®)
- Pembrolizumab
- Histamine dihydrochloride with interleukin-2
- Deuruxolitinib (Leqselvi®)

Previous Managed Entry decisions can be found [here](#)

Prescribing system reminder: Using EMIS prescription fields effectively

As prescriptions are increasingly processed using 2D barcode scanning, information entered into EMIS transfers directly into community pharmacy Patient Medication Record (PMR) systems. Correct use of prescribing fields helps ensure accurate dispensing labels, reduces the need for pharmacy clarification and supports patient safety.

Dosage/Directions Field

All information that should appear on the dispensing label must be entered in the **Dosage/Directions** field. Information entered elsewhere may not transfer to the pharmacy label. Prescribers are encouraged to ensure directions are clear, clinically relevant and up to date.

Including unnecessary, duplicated or obsolete information can result in excessively long labels, sometimes requiring multiple labels for a single item. This can make the key dosage instructions less prominent and increase the risk of important information being overlooked.

Pharmacy Information Field

The **Pharmacy Information** field should be used only for information intended for the pharmacist. Information entered in this field does not print on the dispensing label and may not be communicated to the patient.

Examples of appropriate use include:

- Review dates (e.g. bisphosphonate review due 2027)
- Medicines adherence information (e.g. dispense weekly)

This field should not be used for dosage instructions, administration directions, treatment duration or other patient-facing information.

Patient Information Field

The **Patient Information** field is the preferred location for messages intended for patients. Information entered here prints on the right-hand side of the prescription and is therefore suitable for communicating reminders and advice such as:

- Blood test monitoring reminders
- Sick day rules
- Follow-up or review requirements

Practices should ensure that right-hand-side prescription information is enabled within local EMIS printing settings so that patient messages are visible on the prescription.

Key message

Before issuing, ensure information is entered in the correct EMIS field to support accurate transfer to pharmacy systems, safe dispensing and effective communication.

This newsletter has been produced for GP practices and community pharmacies by the DoH Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) Regional Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team. If you have any queries or require further information on the contents, please contact one of the [Pharmacy Advisers](#).

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