

Community Pharmacy Script

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HRT & Unopposed Oestrogens

All community pharmacies should have received the NHS Ayrshire and Arran HRT Unopposed Oestrogen patient information cards by 16/1/26. If these have not been received, please email the CP team at: aa.cpteam@aapct.scot.nhs.uk

We encourage pharmacy teams to watch the video on HRT & unopposed oestrogens which was shared in December and engage in conversations with patients who fall into this category, using the patient safety cards to aid these patient discussions.

This should help to provide enhanced support for patients, highlighting the importance of taking progestogen alongside oestrogen HRT – where clinically indicated – to reduce the risk of endometrial hyperplasia and its potential progression to endometrial cancer.

We hope pharmacy teams have had a chance to watch this video and feel in a better position to discuss this subject with patients.

A short questionnaire was sent out a few months ago to assess baseline understanding on this issue, thank you to those who completed this.

We plan to repeat this questionnaire to assess improvements to knowledge on unopposed oestrogen. This will be sent out in due course and we thank in advance those who complete this.

You can find the video by attached to the homepage of the [NHS A&A Community Pharmacy Website](#).

Key Messages

December Flu Figures

In the Christmas Communications, we reported that community pharmacies had successfully vaccinated **1,790 patients** against flu, up to the end of November 2025.

By the end of December 2025, this figure increased to **2,810 patients**, with **1,020 patients** being vaccinated in December alone!

ACTION REQUIRED – Care Home Residents Improvements Group

Seeking Community Pharmacy Representation – Transitions of Care for Care Home Residents Improvement Group

We are looking for one community pharmacy representative (pharmacist, pharmacy technician or dispenser) with experience of working with care homes, to join our board-wide Transitions of Care for Care Home Residents Improvement Group.

This group focuses on improving how care home residents experience transitions across care settings, and it would be hugely valuable to have a community pharmacy perspective as part of the discussions.

What's involved?

- Attendance at meetings (1.5 hours). The dates for 2026 are below but we understand that attending every meeting may not be feasible, but even partial attendance would be welcomed.
- 2/3, 13/4, 25/5, 6/7, 24/8, 5/10, 23/11
- Potential involvement in small strands of work, dependent on need, interest and capacity

Who we're looking for:

- Someone working in community pharmacy who supports care homes
- A keen interest in service improvement and resident safety
- Happy to share practical insight from day-to-day practice

This is not intended to be a heavy commitment, but rather an opportunity to ensure community pharmacy is represented and heard in improvement work that directly affects care home residents.

If interested, please get in touch with Heather Fraser Heather.Fraser@aapct.scot.nhs.uk

Simulation Sessions 2026

As part of continuing education and development for our established community pharmacy independent prescribers, we are planning to host a series of simulation sessions. For those of you who are not familiar with the concept of simulation, it is a technique of safely replicating 'real life' skills, drills, and experiences in an effort to realistically rehearse and train in an environment that is safe for both patients and learners. This concept has been used across a variety of healthcare settings for several years as part of clinical training to provide a safe and controlled learning environment where clinicians can make prescribing decisions and learn in real time without compromising patient safety.

The aim of our sessions is to create a supportive learning opportunity in an entirely safe and confidential space to enhance our legacy community pharmacy prescribers' confidence and skills in delivering Pharmacy First Plus. The added bonus is a network opportunity to get to know other community pharmacy prescribers within A&A!

Here's what our Ayrshire & Arran IP community pharmacists recently said about our January Simulation Session:



If you are interested in attending, please email aa.cpteam@aapct.scot.nhs.uk

Reminder

Rybelsus Formulation Switch

We have received notification from NovoNordisk UK that a new formulation of Rybelsus tablets has been launched in the UK. The new formulation of Rybelsus tablets has a higher bioavailability (the proportion of the active substance absorbed into the blood stream) than the initial formulation, which means that lower doses are needed to achieve the same effect.

At present, both formulations are temporarily available meaning there is a risk of patients being prescribed the incorrect dose, which could result in potential overdose and increased risk of gastrointestinal side effects.

Distribution of Rybelsus 3mg, 7mg and 14mg tablets will stop from 31st January 2026.

Primary care teams have been tasked with switching patients to the new formulation by 31st January.

More information can be found here:

[Rybelsus transition to new formulation and risk of medication error.pdf](#)

Cessation Corner #21



I'm Kerry Ingram and I work for Quit Your Way (QYW) in Ayrshire. Over the next few issues, I'm going to be writing about all things smoking-related, with the purpose of helping you to better support your smoking cessation patients. If you have any questions, please contact me. My email address is Kerry.Ingram@aapct.scot.nhs.uk

Everything you need to know about e-cigarettes (vapes)

E-cigarettes (vapes) continue to generate questions from the public, and community pharmacies play a key role in providing clear, evidence-based advice. This short update covers what e-cigarettes are, how they work, why people use them, the benefits compared to smoking and an important reminder about the PCR system and signposting for people wishing to stop vaping.



E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that heat a liquid (usually containing nicotine, flavourings, and other additives) into an aerosol that users inhale. They **do not** burn tobacco and therefore do not produce tar or carbon monoxide, two of the most harmful elements of cigarette smoke. Most devices contain: a battery, coil (heating element), tank or pod holding e-liquid, a mouthpiece. When activated, the device warms the liquid to create vapour, delivering nicotine without combustion.

Why people use e-cigarettes?

Common reasons include:

- To **quit smoking**
- To **reduce cigarette consumption**
- To **manage nicotine cravings**
- Perception that vaping is a **less harmful alternative**
- Availability of **flavours and device types**

For many adults who smoke, switching completely to vaping can be an effective stepping-stone toward becoming nicotine-free.

Are e-cigarettes/vapes safe?

While not risk-free, e-cigarettes are **significantly less harmful than smoking**. All reputable health organisations agree that vaping exposes people to far fewer toxins than tobacco smoke. Key evidence shows:

- E-cigarettes *do not* produce tar or carbon monoxide.
- They contain far fewer harmful chemicals.
- Most of the long-term harm from tobacco comes from burning tobacco, not nicotine.

However: People who do not smoke should not start vaping, and young people should be discouraged from using them. Vaping is intended as a smoking cessation tool for adults who smoke. Pregnant women should also avoid vaping.

Benefits of using e-cigarettes (compared to smoking)

For people who smoke, evidence indicates that switching to vaping can:

- **Reduce exposure to harmful chemicals**
- **Improve respiratory symptoms**
- **Save money** compared with smoking
- Provide a **more controlled nicotine intake**
- Increase the likelihood of **successfully quitting smoking**, especially with behavioural support

For smokers, switching entirely from tobacco to vaping is always better than continuing to smoke.

DO NOT sign up only-vapers to the PCR system. PCR is only for people looking to quit smoking cigarettes. You will not be paid for supporting only-vapers to quit.

The term “only-vapers” refers to anyone who only vapes rather than dual uses (vapes and smokes cigarettes).

The below are exceptions: -

- If a patient smokes cigarettes and they also vape, you can sign them up on PCR if they are looking to stop smoking.
- If someone is looking to stop smoking and they are going to use an e-cigarette to aid their quit, then you can also sign them up to PCR.

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Vapers Wishing to Quit Should Be Referred to Quit Your Way Ayrshire

Helpline: 0800 783 9132 (Mon-Fri: 9am to 4pm)

Here specialist smoking advisors can provide tailored support for:

- People transitioning from vaping to nicotine-free
- Those who previously smoked and now want to stop vaping
- Anyone unsure about the safest approach to quitting

RECENT COMMUNICATIONS SUMMARY

Tuesday 20th January –

aa.cpteam – Drug Alert Class 2 – No 1 2026 – Class 2 Medicines Recall – Action Within 48 Hours – Mercury Pharmaceuticals Ltd – Paliperidone Mercury Pharma Prolonged-Release Suspension For Injections In Pre-Filled Syringes

Thursday 22nd January –

aa.cpteam - DRUG ALERT CLASS 3 – No 2 2026 – CLASS 3 MEDICINES RECALL – ACTION WITHIN 5 DAYS – GLENMARK PHARMACEUTICALS EUROPE LTD – FINGOLIMOD GLENMARK 0.5MG HARD CAPSULES
ClinicalPCT - Circular PCA2026-(P)-02

KEY COMMUNITY PHARMACY CONTACTS

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Information contained in this communication is issued on the understanding that it is the best available from the resources at our disposal and the opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect Ayrshire & Arran Patient Services' policy.