

NHS Ayrshire & Arran Community Pharmacy Update

Please share this update with the wider pharmacy team including reliefs and locum pharmacists

ACTION REQUIRED: HRT Unopposed Oestrogens Project

All community pharmacies should have received the HRT Unopposed Oestrogen patient information cards by 16th January 2026.

If you have not received these, please email the CP team: aa.cpteam@aapct.scot.nhs.uk

Pharmacy teams were asked to watch the video on HRT and engage in conversations with patients who fall into this category, using the patient safety cards to aid 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.

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

INFORMATION: NHSAAA Medicines Guidelines (Website and App)

Adult (16yrs +) prescribing guidelines can be found on the [NHSAAA Medicines - Adult Therapeutics Handbook](#) website. This can also be downloaded as an app by searching 'NHSAAA medicines' in the Apple or Google Play App Stores. This is particularly useful for pharmacists delivering Pharmacy First Plus clinics within their pharmacies and provides useful information on first-line antibiotic choices in Ayrshire & Arran as well as appropriate course durations for antibiotic prescribing, ensuring antimicrobial stewardship is prioritised whilst managing acute illnesses.

INFORMATION: Pharmacist Support Group

Pharmacist Support is a charity who help to support pharmacists, trainees and students through a variety of challenges including mental health & wellbeing, physical health, financial information and support, family and personal life support including bereavement, relationship and family problems and addiction, as well as work life information and support. They provide information and tips on their website and can be contacted directly for further signposting and counselling opportunities. More information can be found on their website by clicking here: [Pharmacist Support](#)

INFORMATION: Independent Prescriber Prescribing Data

Quarterly Pharmacy First Plus prescribing data can be sent to IPs on request by contacting the CP team: aa.cpteam@aapct.scot.nhs.uk. This may be beneficial for auditing purposes.

Information from Previous Communications

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.
- 2nd March, 13th April, 25th May, 6th July, 24th August, 5th October, 23rd November.
- 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 by 12th February 2026.

INFORMATION: Rybelsus Switch

A new formulation of Rybelsus tablets has been launched in the UK.

The new formulation has a higher bioavailability (higher amount of the active drug absorbed into the blood stream) compared with the initial formulation, meaning that smaller doses achieve the same effect. At present, both formulations are temporarily available meaning there is a risk of patients being prescribed an 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 2026. More information can be found by clicking here: [Rybelsus Transition to New Formulation](#)

Rybelsus Patient Information Leaflet has also been attached to this email update.

Information from Previous Communications

INFORMATION: Simulations 2026

As part of continuing education and development for our established community pharmacy independent prescribers, we host a series of simulation sessions. Simulation replicates 'real life' skills, drills, and experiences 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!

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

Here's what our A&A IP Community Pharmacists said about our January Simulation Session:



LET'S FOCUS ON..

Smoking Cessation

Cessation Corner #22



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@nhs.uk

What are tobacco pouches?

They are for oral use only and are **small, white pouches placed between the gum and lip**. They release nicotine into the mouth without producing smoke. They come in two types:

Nicotine pouches (tobacco-free)

- Contain **nicotine**, flavourings, and plant fibres
- Do **not** contain tobacco leaf
- Brands include ZYN, Velo, Nordic Spirit, etc.
- Often marketed as "smoke-free" or "discreet"
- Come in a variety of strengths

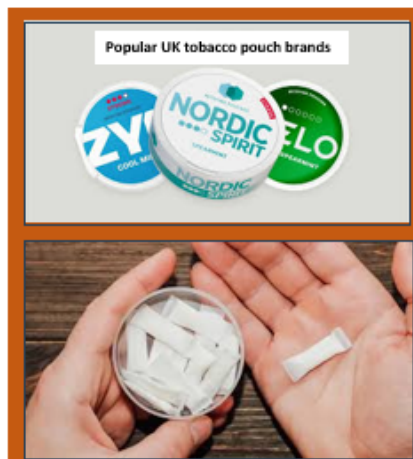
Tobacco pouches (with actual tobacco)

- Contain **finely ground tobacco**
- Like traditional Swedish *snus*, but products vary by region. **Illegal to sell in the UK.**
- Still deliver nicotine and tobacco-specific chemicals

Unlike tobacco products and e-cigarettes, there are currently **NO** regulations in place for nicotine pouches. The government plans to introduce age restrictions and tighter regulations for these under the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to stop sales to children.

USE: Currently 1% of adults are thought to use or have used nicotine pouches, mainly to help them stop smoking. The number using nicotine pouches is on the rise especially in males 16-24 years. Only 84% were previous smokers or vapers.

Most nicotine pouches are manufactured by tobacco companies. They are currently moving away from combustible tobacco and moving into nicotine-only or heat-not-burn products in the hope of retaining consumers and making huge profits. They are currently using the same marketing and advertising methods that we previously saw them use with tobacco. Zyn is made by Philip Morris International who produce Marlboro cigarettes. Velo is made by British American Tobacco who produce Lucky Strike cigarettes. Nordic Spirit is made by a Swedish Snus company.



These products should **NOT** be sold as Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

Nicotine pouches sold in the UK are regulated under the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations (TRPR) 2016 and are **not classified as medicines**.

Because they are **not medicines**, they cannot make **therapeutic (quit-smoking)** claims and therefore cannot be marketed or described as Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). To be called NRT, the product must meet **medicine-level standards of quality, safety, and efficacy** and obtain a marketing authorisation.

Nicotine pouches should **NEVER** be located next to legitimate NRT products in your pharmacy. Doing so sends the message that they are legal medicines for smoking cessation when they are not.

RECENT COMMUNICATIONS SUMMARY

Tuesday 27th January – email from aa.cpteam –

- FSS-PRIN-003-2026 Danone recalls Aptamil First Infant Formula because cereulide (toxin) has been found in this batch
- Drug Alert Class 4 – No 3 2026 – Class 4 Medicines Defect Information – Caution In Use – Blumont Pharma Ltd – Ocumont Eye Ointment 1% W/W

Thursday 29th January – email from aa.cpteam –

- Drug Alert Class 4 – No 4 2026 – Class 4 Medicines Defect Information – Caution In Use – Viatrix Products Ltd – Arixtra Solution For Injection, Pre-Filled Syringes
- National Patient Safety Alert/2026/002/Mhra – ***CLASS 1*** Medicines Recall – Quetiapine Oral Suspension All Strengths (Unlicensed Medicine) Manufactured By Eaststone Limited

Friday 30th January – email from ClinicalPCT –

- Circular PCA2026-(P)-03
- Product Recall Notice: PR416 Nutricia Aptamil First Infant Formula 800g

Monday 2nd February – email from aa.cpteam – Class 2 Drug Alert No 5 2026 - Medicines Recall - Action Within 48 Hours - Accord Healthcare Ltd - Carmustine 100mg Powder And Solvent For Concentrate For Solution For Infusion (1vial 100mg Powder, 1 Vial Of 3ml Solvent)

Monday 2nd February – email from aa.cpteam – Class 2 Drug Alert No 6 2026 - Medicines Recall - Action Within 48 Hours – Syri Ltd T/A Syrimed – Baclofen 10mg/5ml Oral Solution

Monday 2nd February – email from aa.cpteam – Class 3 Drug Alert No 7 2026 - Medicines Recall - Action Within 5 Days – Aspar Pharmaceuticals Ltd – Ibuprofen 200mg Tablets And Ibucalm 200mg Tablets

KEY COMMUNITY PHARMACY CONTACTS

CP Team	Community Pharmacy Administration	aa.cpteam@aapct.scot.nhs.uk	01292 513905/513833
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PRIMARY CARE CONTACTS

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GENERAL ENQUIRIES EMAIL: aa.cpteam@aapct.scot.nhs.uk

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.

