

# Frequently Asked Questions and Guidance

Bath and North East Somerset,  
Swindon and Wiltshire  
Integrated Care Board

Due to a reduction in staffing levels, workforce capacity and strategic priorities, the ICB has **reduced ability to respond to medicines-related queries and cannot deal with clinical queries**- these should be directed to **National Medicines Information** (contact details below)

**Queries from Pharmacy Technicians and Practice Pharmacists must be directed through the correct channels. Pharmacy Technicians should first consult their pharmacist, while Practice Pharmacists should raise queries with their Senior Pharmacist or PCN Pharmacist as their first point of contact. GPs and other Health Care Professionals should direct their queries to their pharmacy teams in the first instance.**

**For Drug shortage information** – refer to our [Stock Shortages](#) page on APC/MO website, note separate page for Creon - [Creon-Shortage](#) , SPS [medicines supply tool](#) (free login required), and [GSK's medicines and vaccines supply availability](#)

**NB**-Individual manufacturers **can be contacted directly** (via telephone or email) to confirm any **current stock issues or supply disruptions**. Refer to the directory of companies, [here](#)

Details of all **Serious shortage protocols** (SSPs) and **MSNs** can be found [here](#)

Many **commonly raised queries** can be answered by existing guidance and online resources. These should be **reviewed before contacting the prescribing or formulary** inbox, as they are likely to address both current and future queries.

**Key resources include:** (**Tip** – sometimes a google search (or other search engine) can provide an answer.)

- **BSW ICB APC/MO Website-** [Medicines](#)
- **BSW Formulary-** [Formulary](#)
- **Teamnet-** [BSW Teamnet](#)
- **Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) Website-** [SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service](#)
- [Answering questions about Medicines – a list of useful resources](#)

## Using the APC/MO Website – Helpful Tips

- Use the **search function** to locate relevant guidance quickly
- Familiarise yourself with the **drop-down menus**
- Add the site to your **browser favourites** for easy future access

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Prescriber Information- GP joiners and leavers/NMPs

#### How can I find information on GP joiners or leavers to a practice?

Guidance on prescriber registration and removal from practices or cost centres can be found on our APC.MO website- [here](#) .**NB** ICBs are not responsible for GP joiners and leavers .

## How can I register a new Non-Medical Prescriber?

Information on NMPs can be found on our website here – [non- medical prescribers \(NMPs\)](#)

## Prescribing Responsibilities

### I have been asked to continue prescribing a medicine initiated by a private specialist. Can I prescribe it?

Refer to the guidance: [BSW ICB Private Treatments](#)

## Prescription Supply and Duration

### I have been asked to prescribe more than three months' supply for a patient travelling abroad.

Guidance from Wessex LMC is available via the APC/MO website: [Travelling Abroad](#)

### What is the maximum or minimum supply I can prescribe (includes 7 day prescribing) ALSO Unlicensed medicines, nurseries and schools, OTC medicines and related queries

Refer to [Prescribing and Prescriptions - Wessex LMCs](#)

**Formulary queries – NB-**The formulary is designed to meet the needs of approximately 90% of patients. If a patient has tried all appropriate formulary options and these have been ineffective or are contraindicated, then-provided the prescriber is willing to accept prescribing responsibility a non-formulary medicine can be considered.

### I have been asked by a specialist outside the BSW area to prescribe a non-formulary or RED traffic-light drug. Should I continue?

If a hospital outside the BSW area requests prescribing of an item **not included on the BSW Formulary** or designated **RED**, practices are advised to follow the **local formulary of the requesting hospital**.

### What is the difference between Amber and Amber – Shared Care medicines?

Definitions for all **Traffic Light statuses** are provided at the **bottom of each chapter of the BSW [Formulary](#)**

### Where can I find prescribing guidance?

Prescribing guidance by **BNF chapter** is available here: [Prescribing guidance - Medicines](#)

### Where can I find Shared Care Agreements and acceptance or refusal letters?

These are available here: [Shared Care Agreements - Medicines](#)

## Special Patient Groups

### Where can I find information on gluten-free prescribing?

Use the **search function on the BSW Formulary** and search “**Gluten-free**”.

Details of recommended products and **monthly prescribing quantities** are provided at the **top of the relevant section**. [Formulary](#)

### A patient has undergone bariatric surgery. What should I prescribe?

For patients who have undergone bariatric surgery, prescribing advice and resources are available from **PrescQIPP** and the **Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS)**.

- **PrescQIPP-** [Bariatric surgery](#)
- **SPS:** [Advising on specific medicines following bariatric surgery – Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#)

### A BSW paediatric dietitian has recommended an ACBS nutritional feed. Can I prescribe it?

Refer to [Drug Tariff](#) (**Tip:** download the PDF version and use *Ctrl + F* to search for the item). If the preparation is prescribed for an **ACBS-approved indication**, it may be continued.

Ensure ongoing communication with the dietitian regarding proposed changes to oral nutritional supplements (ONS) and agreed stop dates.

### Queries regarding vaccines outside the routine immunisation schedule

Contact the **Immunisations Clinical Advice Service (ICARS)**: **Email:** [england.swicars@nhs.net](mailto:england.swicars@nhs.net)

## Incontinence and Appliances

### I have been asked to prescribe incontinence pads. Can I prescribe them?

Incontinence pads are **not listed in the Drug Tariff** and therefore **cannot be prescribed on FP10**.

Please refer patients to: [Bladder, Bowel, Pelvic Health and Continence - BSW Integrated Community Based Care](#)

## Controlled Drugs and Recording Medicines

### How do I dispose of Controlled Drugs/ I have a question around CDs

Please refer to the **Controlled Drugs** section of the APC/MO website or NHS England guidance: [NHS England — South West » Controlled drugs](#)

### How do I record hospital or specialist-prescribed medicines on SystemOne?

Guidance from Ardens is available via the APC/MO website: [How to record specialist prescribed medicines on GP clinical systems](#)

## Clinical Advice and Medicines Information

**For individual patient clinical queries** (e.g. enteral feeding tubes, swallowing difficulties, interactions, excipient queries):

Healthcare professionals in primary care (including community pharmacy) can access Medicines Advice via the **(SPS)**: **Telephone:** 0300 770 8564 **Email:** [asksps.nhs@sps.direct](mailto:asksps.nhs@sps.direct)

### For excipient-related queries

You may contact Medicines Information or use the **advanced search** on the [electronic medicines compendium \(emc\)](#) to identify products that do not contain specific excipients (e.g. lactose).

## Community Pharmacy Queries

If you have a query about a **particular Community Pharmacy**, please contact the **NHS England South -West Hub**, which oversees Community Pharmacy services across BSW. see [NHS England South West – Community Pharmacy](#) All queries relating to **community pharmacy service updates, changes to core or supplementary opening hours, clinical waste services, controlled drugs guidance, or PNA resources** should be directed to: [england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacysouthwest@nhs.net)

### A Community Pharmacy will not supply a medicine as it cannot be obtained at the Drug Tariff price. What should be done?

Community Pharmacies should **not request a replacement prescription** solely because a medicine is available but cannot be obtained at the Drug Tariff price.

There are times when dispensing at a loss may occur. Pricing issues should be reported via the **Price Concessions** process through Community Pharmacy England. Further information:

- [Price Concessions - Community Pharmacy England](#)
- [BSW ICB medicines shortages local tips](#)

### I have a Dossette/MDS /MDA query

See our guidance on the APC/MO website - [BSW- Guidance on Managing Use of MCAs](#)

### Further resources to refer to -

- BSW ICB website- [Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire ICB](#)
- Prior approval and exceptions- [What we do and don't fund - BSW ICB](#)
- BNF- [BNF \(British National Formulary\) | NICE](#)
- BNF-C- [BNFC \(British National Formulary for Children\) | NICE](#)
- Avon &Wiltshire Community pharmacy- [About Us – Avon and Wiltshire](#)
- British association of Dermatologists- [British Association of Dermatologists](#)
- Drug Tariff- [Drug Tariff | NHSBSA](#)
- Herbal Medicines- [Herbal medicines granted a traditional herbal registration \(THR\)](#)
- CKS- [CKS | NICE](#)
- Community Pharmacy England- [NHS medicines database \(dm+d\) - CPE](#)
- The Green Book- [Immunisation against infectious disease - GOV.UK](#)
- PrescQIPP- [We help NHS organisations to improve medicines-related care to patients](#)
- A google (or another search engine!) search can be extremely useful.

**We welcome contact in relation to the following matters via [bswicb.formulary@nhs.net](mailto:bswicb.formulary@nhs.net) :**

- Concerns where you believe you are being asked by a specialist to prescribe outside the agreed formulary
- Errors, inaccuracies, or outdated information identified on our websites
- Enquiries regarding why a specific drug or device is not included on the formulary
- Questions about formulary processes, including the addition of new medicines and shared care arrangements

To help us respond efficiently, we require, specific enquiries that include relevant clinical context, supporting information, and, where applicable, details of the specialist service involved. **No patient identifiable information** should be included unless specifically asked to do so.