

Reducing Opioid Overprescribing



Foreword



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Here in the North East and North Cumbria we have a high rate of opioid prescribing along with one of the highest rates of drug related deaths in the UK. In the NENC region, 20% of the most deprived people in the country take up 33% (approximately 1 million) of the region's population of approximately 3 million. 40% of the countries most deprived people take up 70% of the NENC population (over 2 million people).

Deprivation contributes to the regional life expectancy gap, whereby women in the region can expect to live 8.1 years less than the national average and men 10.4 years less. What contributes to this disparity in life expectancy is the long-term health conditions experienced by the more socially disadvantaged populations. In this population, the onset of chronic conditions often presents earlier in life, despite life being shorter resulting in increased contact with healthcare services. Some of these long-term conditions are related to chronic pain.

Health Innovation North East North Cumbria have supported a system-wide approach to tackling inappropriate prescribing of opioids for chronic non-cancer pain. The prescribing volume of opioids in GP practices in NENC ICB has decreased by 6% between Q1 23/24 and Q1 24/25 compared to a 2.8% decrease for England.

The projects outlined in this document, supported by HI NENC, have contributed to this decrease.



Case studies

NHS Insights Prioritisation Programme (NIPP)

A GP video sent to patients' smartphones to encourage reducing or stopping opioid use as part of a primary care intervention.

Video has been disseminated to
45 GP practices
and watched

863 times by patients
across the region
for the purposes
of NIPP.



**18 staff members
and 14 patients**

have been
interviewed about
their experience of
the NIPP project.



Aims to help patient understand about opioids and instigate an opioid medicines review request from the clinician.

For more information, please access the HI NENC NIPP webpages <https://healthinnovation-nenc.org.uk/what-we-do/improving-population-health/medicines-optimisation/reduce-opioid-prescribing/opioid-nipp/>

First Contact Practitioner (FCP) Video Resource

An opioid awareness training video tool for FCPs launched and evaluated at FCP Community of Practice.

361 people registered to
attend the launch
webinar with



199 delegates
attending.



The evaluation was **completed**
by **50 of the attendees**,
demonstrating an increase
in confidence to have a
conversation and increased
likelihood of having a
conversation with a patient.

Aimed at FCPs to increase confidence to engage a patient in conversation about their opioids.

To view the video and associated information, please access: <https://healthinnovationnenc.org.uk/what-we-do/improving-population-health/medicines-optimisation/reduce-opioid-prescribing/health-care-professionals-opioid-awareness-resources/>

Case studies

NENC Secondary Care Opioid Reduction Pharmacist Network

NENC Secondary Care Opioid Reduction Pharmacist Network continuing initiatives started in 2023.

All

8

NENC secondary care trusts have a pharmacist representative at the NENC Secondary Care Opioid Reduction Pharmacist Network. HI NENC have facilitated the contact with representatives from these Trusts.



Aims to address inconsistencies when dealing with patients admitted to hospital for surgery using opioid guardianship to ensure that prescribing protocols are harmonised and good practice is shared across all hospital trusts in the region.

For more information about pain and opioid reduction please visit: <https://healthinnovation-nenc.org.uk/what-we-do/improving-population-health/medicines-optimisation/reduce-opioid-prescribing/>

North East North Cumbria Clinical Pain Network

NENC Clinical Pain Network was set up in June 2023 with membership from stakeholders from across the ICS

Alignment with NENC Pain Community of Practice.



Stakeholder membership from various disciplines from across the system.



Enables ICS-wide approach to pain management.

For more information about pain and opioid reduction please visit: <https://healthinnovation-nenc.org.uk/what-we-do/improving-population-health/medicines-optimisation/reduce-opioid-prescribing/>

Case studies

Pain Community of Practice

HI NENC organise and host a quarterly community of practice for clinicians and commissioners from across the regions at the various tiers of the pain pathway

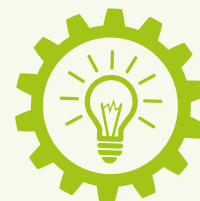
Over

200



people on the community mailing list

170



members on the dedicated Pain Community of Practice NHS Futures Platform

Translate policy into practice, promote evidence-based care, enhance chronic pain management through collaboration and communication and connect clinicians with services to improve patient outcomes.

If you would like to join the NENC Pain Community of Practice, please visit the dedicated NHS Futures platform: <https://future.nhs.uk/NENC Pain Community>

Pain Podcasts

A series of pain and opioid podcasts to present the differing perspectives of stakeholders.

Two podcasts released to date



Persistent Pain

45

listens

FCP and pharmacy collaboration



89

listens

Spreading the messaging about opioid prescribing from a varied position creating a deeper understanding of the situation.

To listen please visit: <https://healthinnovationnenc.org.uk/news-and-events/podcasts/> and choose podcasts 7 and 9 which focus on pain and opioid reduction.

Case studies

Bridge View Opioid Reduction Project

Supporting the appointment of a specialist pharmacist to contribute to a multidisciplinary practice approach to opioid prescribing/deprescribing

13.9%

reduction in volume of opioid prescriptions from Q3 22/23 to Q3 23/24

Number of patients on high dose opioid prescriptions reduced by

18.4%

from May 23 to February 24.



Alongside a wider programme of work within the practice, including reviewing their prescribing protocol and contacting patients on high dose opiates, the specialist pharmacist provided a dedicated clinic appointment with patients, who wanted to reduce their opiates.

NuTH Opioid Awareness Support

Supported the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in their opioid awareness week.

60



views of HI NENC Opioid and Pain resource webpages

2,814

tweets and retweets

Promoting a shared aim across the health care system to reduce opioid prescriptions and what each sector is doing to support this.

To access resources to support pain management and opioid reduction please visit: <https://healthinnovationenc.org.uk/what-we-do/improving-population-health/medicines-optimisation/reduce-opioid-prescribing/pain-and-opioid-management-resources/>

Case studies

Drugs of Dependence Prescribing Dashboard

The North East and North Cumbria ICB Pain Portfolio Group have developed a metric dashboard to be able to consistently monitor prescribing of drugs of dependence across the region.

Each SICBL have chosen an opioid based metric/project to incorporate into 24/25 medicines optimisation workplans.

Data used at each pain and opioid meeting to review progress.

HI NENC supporting to establish where problems areas are and where work on opioid reduction is having an impact.

To access resources to support pain management and opioid reduction please visit: <https://healthinnovationnenc.org.uk/what-we-do/improving-population-health/medicines-optimisation/reduce-opioid-prescribing/pain-and-opioid-management-resources/>

Position Statement on Prescribing in Persistent Pain

Position statement developed by the ICB Medicines Committee and supported by HI NENC

Hosted on HI NENC Opioid Reduction webpages

Using the position statement, HI NENC and the ICB is working with partner organisations to reduce the inappropriate use of opioids in managing long term pain.

Please view the North East North Cumbria (NENC) ICB Medicines Committee [Position Statement on Prescribing in Persistent Pain](#).

Pain and Opioids Webpages

Collated pain and opioid resources on HI NENC webpages

Information and resources to support better understanding of pain management and opioid reduction.

To access resources to support pain management and opioid reduction please visit: <https://healthinnovationnenc.org.uk/what-we-do/improving-population-health/medicines-optimisation/reduce-opioid-prescribing/pain-and-opioid-management-resources/>

552

Visits

