**Humber and North Yorkshire Health**

**and Care Partnership**

**Humber and North Yorkshire Area Prescribing Committee (HNY APC) – Approved February 2025**

**Principles for using bioequivalent (biosimilar) medicines across Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership - in essence, switching to the best value product will be automatic for all patients.**

Humber and North Yorkshire Area Prescribing Committee mandates that, based upon a robust review of the evidence, all providers in HNY Health and Care Partnership should routinely support the use of the most cost-effective biologic medicine at any one time and consider the medicines fully interchangeable.

As you know, bioequivalent medicines have now been used in clinical practice for over 15 years, and the systematic use of the most cost-effective bioequivalent product has released millions of pounds into the NHS to be reinvested in patient care.

The British National Formulary states that biosimilar medicines should be therapeutically equivalent to the originator biological medicine within their authorised indications.

The principles agreed to follow are:

* HNY APC considers different brands of the same biologic medicines to be bioequivalent and interchangeable.
* All new prescriptions for biologic medicines will be provided with the most cost-effective product at that time.
* Initial counselling of all patients before they start treatment with a biologic medicine will include information that the brand they receive may change during their treatment course.
* Individual patients will not need to be counselled or consented each time there is a brand change; it would be considered good practice to keep individual patients up-to-date with the product being used.
* A provider-wide [patient information leaflet](https://humberandnorthyorkshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Bioequivalents-Patient-Information-Leaflet-Final-Approved-HNY-APC-Feb-2025.docx) will be available to support specialist teams with these discussions.
* The HNY APC will persist in identifying and addressing clinical areas where opportunities for switching are being missed.

Clinical teams are asked to:

* Review any patients remaining on more costly originator biologic brands of medicines and support a change to a more cost-effective alternative where possible.
* Start advising new and existing patients on possible future product changes.

**Aims:**

* Establish principles that will ensure smooth substitution whenever new bioequivalent medicines become available.
* Remove the need to contact individual patients each time there is a brand change.
* Minimise the risk related to potential supply chain shortages.
* Achieve provider-wide consistency to maximise medicines savings and minimise any missed opportunities.
* Re-invest medicines savings into patient care, where possible. Since 2022, there has been significant improvement in the switch to best value bioequivalent medicines, resulting in significant savings. However, there are still areas where switches have not progressed, and patients remain on brands that cost much more than the best-value product available. This is not financially sustainable. There are several new bioequivalent products becoming available in quick succession.

To maximise opportunities for savings, providers will need to switch more efficiently. We are therefore asking services to roll out their existing, successful switch planning to all clinical areas. In essence, switching to the best value product will be automatic for all patients. As with any other medicines, patients will be offered treatment with the best value product and do not choose the brand that they wish to receive.

Clinicians who have exceptional patients for whom an alternative brand must be used for clinical reasons can request this using a standard form; a copy will be kept in the patient notes. Sample form [here](https://humberandnorthyorkshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Sample-Form-Bioequivalent-Clinical-Exceptionality-Doc-HNY-APC-March-2025.docx) – to be tailored by each organisation, as appropriate.

HNY APC remains committed to the safe and effective care of our patients whilst using NHS resources wisely for the benefit of the population we care for.

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If you require further information, please do contact us at: nuth.hnyapc@nhs.net

**https://humberandnorthyorkshire.org.uk/area-prescribing-committee-apc/**