

North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Northern Treatment Advisory Group (NTAG)

Minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2026 9am-11.30am via Microsoft
TEAMS

Present:

Position	Lead		Voting Member	Nov 2025	Jan 2026	Mar 2026
Chair	<i>Dr Chris Jewitt Clinical Lead for Prescribing and Medicines Management NENC ICB</i>		Yes	✓	✓	✓
Secretary and Professional Secretary Guidelines and Pathways Group	<i>Gavin Mankin, Principal Pharmacist – Medicines Management, Regional Drug & Therapeutics Centre (Newcastle)</i>		No	✓	✓	✓
Provider hospital trusts representative (2 x consultant, 2 x pharmacy plus Mental Health)	Mental Health Trust Chief Pharmacist	<i>Chris Williams Chief Pharmacist Tees Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust</i>	Yes	Tim Donaldson	Chris Williams	Tim Donaldson
	Mental Health Trust Consultant	TBC	Yes	X	X	X
	Consultant	<i>Dr Andrew Lloyd Consultant Anaesthetist and Chair of South Tees Hospital NHS Foundation Trust D&T</i>	Yes	✓	✓	✓
	Consultant	<i>Dr Simon Hill Consultant in Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics and Clinical Toxicologist, NuTH</i>	Yes	✓	Matthew Lowery	✓
	Trust Chief Pharmacist	<i>Jamie Harris Chief Pharmacist South Tees Hospital NHS Foundation Trust</i>	Yes	Mark Thomas	X	Mark Thomas
	Pharmacist	<i>Al Green Formulary</i>	Yes	✓	X	Apols

		<i>Pharmacist Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust</i>				
Primary Care (2 x GP, 2 x MO Pharmacist)	GP	<i>Dr Fadi Khalil ICB Clinical Lead with prescribing (Sunderland place)</i>	Yes	✓	✓ (from 9.30am)	X
	GP	<i>Dr Helen Andrews GP Clinical Editor North ICP</i>	Yes	✓	✓ (from 9.30am)	Apols
	MO Pharmacist	<i>Kate Huddart Deputy Director of Medicines</i>	Yes	✓	✓	✓
	MO Pharmacist	<i>Angela Dixon Head of Pharmacy and Medicines (Tees Valley)</i>	Yes	✓	✓	✓
Paediatric representative	<i>Dr Yincen Tse Consultant Paediatric Nephrologist, Great North Children's Hospital</i>		Yes	X	✓	X
Finance representative	<i>Kate Hudson-Halliday Finance Director NENC ICB</i>		Yes	Richard Turnbull	✓	✓
Patient representative	<i>Jim Welch</i>		Yes	✓	✓	Apols
Public Health	<i>Dr Toks Sangowawa Clinical Advisor/Locum Consultant in Public Health, South Tyneside MBC Clinical Advisor IFR North</i>		Yes	✓	✓	Apols
Local Authority Pharmacist (1 representing all stakeholder local authorities)	<i>Jo Linton Public Health Pharmacy Adviser Stockton and Hartlepool</i>		Yes	Apols	✓	Apols
Health Innovation Network - NENC	<i>Helen Seymour Health Innovation Network - NENC Medicines Optimisation Workstream Lead</i>		Yes	✓	Apols	✓
LPC (1 representing all stakeholder LPCs)	<i>Rob Pitt</i>		Yes	✓	✓	✓
LMC (1 representing all stakeholder LPCs)			Yes	Richard Glennie	Debs White	Paul Evans
Nursing representative			Yes	Claire Barron	✓	✓
Chair of Formulary Working Group	<i>Shafie Kamaruddin Consultant County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust</i>		Yes	Resigned (Andrew Berrington apols)	X	X
Professional	<i>Alan Green</i>		Yes	✓	✓	✓

Secretary of Formulary Working Group	<i>Pharmacist, NENC ICB</i>				
Chair of Guidelines and Pathways Group	<i>Matthew Grove Consultant Rheumatologist, Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust</i>	Yes	✓	✓	✓

In Attendance

Item 1 Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting.

NTAG noted that Chris Jewitt, the current NTAG chair, is stepping down from his ICB role so this will be his last meeting. NTAG wished to express their thanks and gratitude to Chris for all his support and hard work on behalf of NTAG since he took on the role of Chair. The new chair of NTAG is still to be identified.

NTAG also noted Fadi Khalil is also stepping down from his ICB role so this will be his last meeting. NTAG wish to thank Fadi for his support and contributions to NTAG.

In attendance:

Hannah Willoughby - NENC ICB – for item 8

Dr Suzy Guirguis - Consultant Psychiatrist, CNTW - for item 8+9

Chris Williams – Chief Pharmacist, TEWV – attended in a none voting capacity with particular reference to item 8+9.

Item 1 Apologies for Absence

Helen Andrews, Toks Sangowawa, Al Green, Jim Welch, Matthew Lowery

Item 1 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received prior to the meeting on receipt of the agenda.

Item 1 Quoracy

The meeting was quorate.

Item 2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th January 2026

The minutes from the January 2026 meeting were accepted as a true record.

ACTION:

Secretary to submit January 2026 minutes to NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee.

RESOLVED:

- Members approved the January 2026 NTAG Minutes.

Item 2

Action log

The action log was reviewed and will be updated to reflect the following:

RDTC monthly formulary amendments – NICE TA/MHRA Drug Safety Updates – NICE TA/MHRA Drug Safety Updates – October + November 2025 + other formulary amendments NTAG agreed with the suggested formulary

Sent to Jan 2026 NENC CEG and all approved. Published on NTAG website and formulary updated. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

Linzagolix and Relugolix–estradiol–norethisterone formulary RAG review

ICB Women's Health Network developing a supporting pathway to enable the prescribing to be done by GP's and DXA scans/monitoring by secondary care. Awaiting submission of draft to the governance process.

Pathway for male suspected breast cancer

Sent to Jan 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

NENC gabapentin and pregabalin dose reduction regimen

Sent to Jan 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

NENC Osteoporosis Guideline

Sent to Jan 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

NENC Gluten Free Guideline

Sent to Jan 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

Asthma Guideline (paediatrics) – updated

Sent to Jan 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

NENC Atomoxetine, Guanfacine, Lisdexamfetamine, Dexamfetamine and Methylphenidate Shared Care for adults

Sent to Feb 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

NENC Atomoxetine, Guanfacine, Lisdexamfetamine, Dexamfetamine and Methylphenidate Shared Care for paediatrics

Sent to Feb 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

NENC Cinacalcet SCG

Sent to Jan 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

NENC Riluzole SCG

Sent to Jan 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

NENC-ICB-position-statement. Antimicrobial Stewardship - v1
approved June 2025 - updated Dec 2025

Sent to Jan 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

NENC Third Party Ordering Position statement

Sent to Jan 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

Denosumab Biosimilars – Information for Primary Care

Sent to Jan 2026 NENC CEG and all approved Published on NTAG website. ITEM NOW CLOSED.

NENC What Good Looks Like – Principles for Sharing of Care
Relating to Prescribing of Medication - draft for comments

Still to go out for consultation on NTAG website.

Item 3 Appeals against previous NTAG decisions

Nil received since last meeting.

RESOLVED:

- Members received for information.

Formulary and RAG

**Item 4 RDTC monthly formulary amendments – NICE TA/MHRA Drug
Safety Updates – December 2025 + January 2026**

The RDTC Monthly Formulary Amendments – NICE TA/MHRA Drug Safety Updates – December 2025 + January 2026 were presented to NTAG to make a recommendation to the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee on the formulary status and approval of medicines contained within these documents.

Comments were raised during the consultation reviewed and discussed by NTAG. Had responses from:

- Northumbria Trust
- STSFT
- NuTH
- North Tees Trust
- TEWV
- QE Gateshead

All those who responded agreed with the suggested RAG status in the documents.

There were no ICB commissioned NICE TAs published in December

2025 and January 2026.

ACTION:

Secretary to send recommendations to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee for final sign off.

RESOLVED:

NTAG agreed to make recommendation to the NENC Clinical Effectiveness & Governance Subcommittee on the formulary status and approval of medicines with a NICE TA issued in December 2025 and January 2026 as per the "Suggested action for APC" column.

Item 5

Formulary applications and other formulary amendments – January 2026 Formulary Working Group

Been out for 4-week consultation via NTAG website. The comments received were reviewed by NTAG. Had responses from:

Had responses from:

- QE Gateshead
- STSFT
- Northumbria Trust
- Primary care
- Regional Neurology

No respond from:

- STHFT
- CDDFT
- NCIC
- NuTH
- North Tees Trust
- CNTW
- TEWV

All those who responded agreed with the suggested RAG status were received with the exception of:

- Docusate – NTAG agreed should be classed as non-formulary as evidence base does not support use in regular practice.
- Rimegepant and atogepant for prevention of migraine – NTAG discussed the consultant comments received from neurology including a draft supporting pathway/prescribing guideline. NTAG noted the discussions from January 2026 FWG meeting.

NTAG supported the FWG recommendation to make no change to current status but to amend formulary to clarify that, when used under the green plus preventative indication, the first 3 months supply should be from a neurology/headache specialist in secondary care.

This was because:

- GP experience of prescribing these drugs is still limited. Confirmed by experience of GPs/LMC present at NTAG. GPs feel gepants are not yet a standard treatment in primary care and do not feel confident to undertake the

- three month review of benefit.
- To ensure that the 3 month review of benefit takes place and clarity on whose responsibility it is to do these necessary 3 month reviews. In addition, concerns wording of HCPs confident to do this would lead to variation in practice across NENC.
- Advice & Guidance is not being funded in primary care contract from April so any pathway that relies on A&G after that date might be less effective.

Other issues discussed by NTAG:

- Fenofibrate for diabetic retinopathy - to defer a decision. Need to approach ophthalmology in NENC to get an estimate of potential numbers of eligible patients so that can proceed to CEG for sign off with an adequate cost impact assessment.
- Eflornithine 11.5% cream for hirsutism - agreed that eflornithine is a cosmetic treatment and a non-formulary status is appropriate to be on formulary as a first step but does not need to be added to the DNP list as this time (same as decision for docusate above).

ACTION:

Secretary to send recommendations to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee for final sign off.

RESOLVED:

NTAG agreed to make a recommendation to the March 2026 NENC CEG as per the January 2026 Formulary Working Group - Miscellaneous Formulary amendments "Suggested action for APC" column" with the exception of:

- Fenofibrate for diabetic retinopathy - to defer a decision. Need to approach ophthalmology in NENC to get an estimate of potential numbers of eligible patients so that can proceed to CEG for sign off with an adequate cost impact assessment.
- Eflornithine 11.5% cream for hirsutism - agreed that eflornithine is a cosmetic treatment and a non-formulary status is appropriate to be on formulary but does not need to be added to the DNP list at this time

Item 6

NHSE Specialised Commissioning Circulars

A list of NHSE Specialised Commissioning Circulars published since January 2026 was circulated for information. The formulary will reflect the NHSE Specialised Commissioning Circulars.

RESOLVED:

Members received for information.

Pathways and Clinical Guidelines

Item 7 NENC Clozapine supporting guidance for primary care – due review Feb 2026

A reviewed/updated NENC Clozapine supporting guidance for primary care was presented to and recommended for approval by NTAG. It was recommended for approval at the March 2026 NENC Clinical Guidelines & Pathways Group. It was due for review in February 2026 and had minor technical updates only.

ACTION:

Secretary to send to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee for final sign off.

RESOLVED:

NTAG agreed to recommend approval to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee.

Item 8 NENC Oral Antipsychotics- Safe Prescribing

A new NENC Oral Antipsychotics- Safe Prescribing Guideline was presented to and recommended for approval by NTAG. It was recommended for approval at the March 2026 NENC Clinical Guidelines & Pathways Group following NENC wide consultation subject to working group continuing to meet to review implementation of guideline, plus further review of RAG status. The following points were raised in discussion:

- To support current prescribing of oral antipsychotics and support GP practices that have signed up to the LES.
- Noted high volume of negative consultation comments and LMC concerns re RAG status. RAG status has been Green+ for a number of years, and no new safety issues identified to suggest a change to AMBER SC is required currently. Any change in RAG status would have significant commissioning/capacity issues for mental health trusts.
- Noted variation in RAG status across the country. At this stage do not know what impact of Single National Formulary might be.
- This is about a pathway for patients and what is right/safe for them.
- Guideline now empowers GPs to ensure these patients are reviewed and gives GPs right to refer back to mental health which is a positive thing.
- Automatic recall by Mental health of patients after 5 years is the plan if not been reviewed by specialist.
- This is an interim guideline to support safe prescribing of oral antipsychotics in short to medium term. Working group to continue to meet to operationalise guideline and also review it in 9 months time.
- Discussed QoF and and non-QoF cover SMI patients. This

pathway and the LES will support review of non-QoF covered patients and physical health monitoring for these patients.

ACTION:

Secretary to send to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee for final sign off subject to changes above being made.

RESOLVED:

NTAG agreed to recommend approval to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee subject to changes above being made.

Shared care

Item 9

NENC Valproate SCG

A new NENC Valproate SCG was presented to and recommended for approval by NTAG. It was recommended for approval at the March 2026 NENC Clinical Guidelines & Pathways Group. It has been out for consultation and all the comments acted on by the authors/working group.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- New NENC wide shared care guideline to support compliance with valproate pregnancy prevention safety measures as per product license and MHRA safety updates.
- To support the introduction of the NENC wide Medicines Local Enhanced Service which incorporates shared care monitoring.
- There may be service impacts for secondary care relating to providing services to people of childbearing potential.
- Further correspondence received from neurologists since final draft prepared has been discussed with ICB Director of Pharmacy and he has discussed with Trust Medical Directors.
- In response to the issues raised re overdue annual checks and people not engaging with the pregnancy prevention programme - these have been noted as of particular concern in section 6 and a second link added to emphasise the importance of the Pan-Collegiate Guidance. There is guidance in the linked Pan-Collegiate Guidance on how to handle these (sections 5.7 and 5.9)

ACTION:

Secretary to send to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee for final sign off.

RESOLVED:

NTAG agreed to recommend approval to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee.

- Item 10** **NENC Amiodarone and Dronedarone SCGs – due review March 2026**
- A reviewed/updated NENC Amiodarone and Dronedarone SCGs were presented to and recommended for approval by NTAG. They were recommended for approval at the March 2026 NENC Clinical Guidelines & Pathways Group. They were due for review in March 2026. Had minor technical updates only to match latest template from RDTC and SPC so have not been out for full consultation.
- The following points were raised in discussion:
- Dronedarone – LFTs – merge 3 rows about hepatotoxicity into one and change action to read greater than 3xULN or any hepatotoxic symptoms stop drug and discuss with specialist.
- ACTION:**
Secretary to send to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee for final sign off subject to above change being made.
- RESOLVED:**
NTAG agreed to recommend approval to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee subject to above change being made.
- Item 11** **NENC Lithium SCG – due review March 2026 – extending review date.**
- The NENC Lithium SCG is due a review in March 2026. An updated RDTC Lithium SCG template was published in January 2026. NTAG discussed an extension of the review date until July 2026 to allow for NENC SCG to be updated to reflect the updated RDTC version. No patient harm expected from extending the review date.
- ACTION:**
Secretary to send to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee for final sign off.
- RESOLVED:**
NTAG agreed to recommend approval to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee.
- Item 12** **NENC DMARD SCGs - due review March 2026 – extending review date.**
- The NENC DMARD SCGs are due a review in March 2026. NATG discussed an extension of the review date until September 2026 to allow for RDTC SCG templates on which they are based to be updated as per BSR 2025 DMARD Monitoring Guidelines, and the NENC SCGs to subsequently be updated.
- ACTION:**
Secretary to send to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee for

final sign off.

RESOLVED:

NTAG agreed to recommend approval to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee.

Updates from Subgroups

- Item 13 NENC Formulary Working Group**
Verbal update given on March 2026 meeting.
- Item 14 NENC Clinical Pathways and Guidelines Group**
Verbal update given on March 2026 meeting.
The January 2026 minutes were received for information.
Noted that the NENC Mucolytics in adults consensus guideline has been retired as it has expired and is no longer needed.

Work plan and horizon scanning

- Item 15 RDTC Monthly horizon scanning January + February 2026**
NTAG received the RDTC monthly horizon scanning report for January and February 2026 for information.

RESOLVED:

Members received for information.

- Item 16 NENC Medicines Governance Workplan**
Current NENC Medicines Governance draft work plan for 2026/27 circulated for information.

RESOLVED:

Members received for information.

Other

- Item 17 RDTC Publication - Principles for embedding pharmacogenomics into NHS medicines governance**
NTAG is asked to note the contents of this RDTC publication and the considerations within it and communicate any known areas of governance improvement to NENC medicines governance system i.e. NTAG, CEG to ensure system readiness for new PGx recommendations.
NENC will need go consider these test as they become available via its medicines governance process, and as part of this consider commissioning/cost impact.

RESOLVED:

Members received for information.

- Item 18 Finerenone for CKD in T2DM – due review Feb 2026**
The reviewed NENC Finerenone for CKD in T2DM guideline was

presented to and recommended for approval by NTAG. It was due a review in February 2026 and no changes to the content have been made. Noted that it has not been out for consultation as no changes made.

ACTION:

Secretary to send to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee for final sign off.

RESOLVED:

NTAG agreed to recommend approval to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee.

Item 19

North East North Cumbria (NENC) ICB Medicines Committee Position Statement on Prescribing in Persistent Pain – update Feb 2026

This updated NENC position statement was presented to and recommended for approval by NTAG. An update has been made to the North East North Cumbria (NENC) ICB Medicines Committee Position Statement on Prescribing in Persistent Pain following the publication of The Faculty of Pain Medicine's website updated Opioid Aware guidance on the which has made changed recommended morphine equivalence reducing it from 120mg to 90 mg / day. Update supported at March 2026 Clinical Guidelines & Pathways Group.

Noted that it has not been out for consultation but has been reviewed ICB Pain Group.

The following points were raised in discussion

- Change word painkillers to analgesics for consistency as one of the references is the "Painkillers don't exist" campaign.

ACTION:

Secretary to send to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee for final sign off.

RESOLVED:

NTAG agreed to recommend approval to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee.

Item 20

NENC Osteoporosis Guideline – minor amendment

A minor amendment to the NENC Osteoporosis Guideline was presented to and recommended for approval by NTAG.

Supported at March 2026 Clinical Guidelines & Pathways Group.

The Clinical Guidelines and Pathways Group agreed to amend the osteoporosis guideline to match the denosumab SCG say:

'Denosumab is not nephrotoxic so has been proposed as an alternative to bisphosphonates in patients with low bone density and CKD4 and 5. This is not straightforward and such treatment should

be undertaken only by metabolic bone or renal specialists.'

Noted LMC comments re reference to Advice & Guidance but at this stage feel no change to guideline is needed and a letter to specialist would also be acceptable.

ACTION:

Secretary to send to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee for final sign off.

RESOLVED:

NTAG agreed to recommend approval to the March 2026 meeting of the NENC Clinical Effectiveness and Governance (CEG) Subcommittee.

Item 21

Chair's action since last meeting

- 27.1.26 - removal of Fostair MDI from NENC formulary.
- 10.2.26 - NENC SGLT2 top tips guideline – technical amendment re generic dapagliflozin
- 18.2.26 – NENC COPD guidance – links updated

Item 22

Any other business

Single National Formulary

National team asked ICBs for expressions of interest in piloting the single national formulary that is in development. NENC ICB have asked for more detail on timescales and what is involved. NTAG members suggested for others to pilot this rather than NENC due to sensitivities currently around shared care in the NENC.

CLOSE

The meeting was closed at 10.50 hrs.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: 19th May 2026, 9am-11.30am vis Microsoft Teams