

Communications toolkit for GP practices – Changes to NHS prescriptions for gluten-free bread and flour mix.

April 2026

About this toolkit

This toolkit offers guidance and resources for GP practices across South Yorkshire to support patient communication and the deprescribing of gluten-free bread and flour mixes.

Background

Following a 12-week engagement process, the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (SY ICB) took the decision on 3rd Dec 2025 to decommission the routine prescribing of gluten free bread and flour mixes for patients in primary care (except for the most at risk of clinical harm by not adhering to a gluten free diet).

Toolkit contents

- SY ICB Position Statement
- Website link
- SystemOne/EMIS searches to identify patients currently prescribed gluten-free bread and flour
- Process for deprescribing gluten-free products
- Draft letter to be sent to patients who receive a prescription for gluten-free bread or flour mixes.

SY ICB Position Statement

Prescribing of Gluten Free Bread and Flour Mixes in Primary Care

NHS South Yorkshire (SY) ICB Position Statement - Prescribing of Gluten Free Bread and Flour Mixes in South Yorkshire.

SYICB does not recommend the routine prescribing of gluten free food products for use in coeliac disease, confirmed gluten-sensitive enteropathies and dermatitis herpetiformis or other gluten intolerances in South Yorkshire.

SY IMOC Traffic Light Status: GREY (gluten free products should not be prescribed in South Yorkshire unless exceptional circumstances apply).

Background

Following a 12-week engagement process, the SY Integrated Care Board took the decision on 3rd December 2025 to decommission the routine prescribing of gluten free bread and flour mixes for patients in primary care (except for the most at risk of clinical harm by not adhering to a gluten free diet).

The ICB has a responsibility to balance the needs of all our communities and ensure that we are delivering the best possible value for money within the resources available.

New Patients

Newly diagnosed patients of any age should not be prescribed gluten free food products by default.

Existing Patients

All existing patients receiving gluten free food products on prescription should be informed that prescribing of gluten free foods is no longer available in primary care.

Exceptions to the position statement

Exceptionality from this position statement exists for those patients most at risk of clinical harm by not adhering to a gluten free diet.

Prescribers have clinical discretion to act in an individual patient's best interest where exceptional clinical circumstances exist, and they are sufficiently convinced that there is a genuine risk of clinical harm if they do not prescribe gluten free bread or flour mixes. Any such decisions should be recorded clearly in the patient's clinical record.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Patients diagnosed with refractory coeliac disease (RCD)
- Patients lacking capacity (Dementia or learning disabilities) to aid in managing adherence of a gluten-free diet.

Note: Financial reasons alone are not considered exceptional.

As gluten free bread and flour mixes form only part of a gluten free diet, it is important to advise patients to maintain a healthy, balanced gluten free diet to ensure adequate intake of vitamins and minerals. Further information is available on the South Yorkshire ICB Medicines Optimisation website here <https://mot.southyorkshire.icb.nhs.uk/search?locations=south-yorkshire&q=gluten+free>

SystemOne and EMIS Searches

SystemOne:

SYICB Shared Resources / Medicines Optimisation Team 2025 2026 / Gluten Free Prescribing Review

EMIS Web:

Barnsley Place | Report Library / Medicines Optimisation / Gluten-Free Prescribing Review

Doncaster Place | Report Library / Medicines Optimisation / Gluten-Free Prescribing Review

Rotherham Place | Report Library / Medicines Optimisation / Gluten-Free Prescribing Review

Sheffield Place | Report Library / Medicines Optimisation / Gluten-Free Prescribing Review

Both searches prioritise patients as follows:

1. Most recent GF issue in last 6 months and coded Coeliac Disease / Dermatitis Herpetiformis
2. Most recent GF issue in last 6 months and NOT coded Coeliac Disease / Dermatitis Herpetiformis
3. Most recent GF issue between 6-12 months ago and coded Coeliac Disease / Dermatitis Herpetiformis
4. Most recent GF issue between 6-12 months ago and NOT coded Coeliac Disease / Dermatitis Herpetiformis

The searches are used in conjunction with an Output (SystemOne) or Auto-reports (EMIS Web). Both will show the previous *last 3 issues* and allow for patients to be prioritised by age or user-defined criteria e.g. most recent issue date.

Process for Deprescribing

Preparation

Run System Searches

- Using the GF prescribing searches available in your system as shown above.
- Export both lists for review.

Clinical Review

For each patient:

- Check medical record for confirmed diagnosis of coeliac disease. Expand to include full diagnosis and SNOMED codes.
- Check for documented reasons that may require ongoing prescribing
- Review any documented concerns, e.g.: dietician recommendation, adherence concerns

Decision Making

Option A: No exceptionality needs

- → Proceed with deprescribing.

Option B: Exceptional circumstances identified

- → Continue prescribing BUT:
 1. Rationalise quantity
 2. Ensure only essential staple items (e.g. bread, flour mixes)
 3. Document reasons for exceptionality in the patient's medical records
 4. Review annually

Structured Patient Review (if needed)

If any complexity is identified, consider a short review to:

- Explain ICB policy
- Assess whether the patient has a clear exceptional need

Actions in Clinical System

- Remove GF items from repeats (if deprescribed).
- Add a consultation note:
 - Option A: *"GF products deprescribed in line with ICB policy."*
 - Option B: *"GF products deprescribed in line with ICB policy – reviewed individual circumstances, no exceptional need."*
 - Option C: *"GF products not deprescribed, exceptional circumstances identified (include detail of exceptionality, products and quantities to prescribe)"* **Where exceptionality applies, only gluten free bread and flour mixes should be prescribed. No other gluten free products should be prescribed.**

Monitoring & Reporting

- Re-run searches quarterly to ensure no accidental re-addition of GF items
- Escalate appropriately, if any ongoing dietary issues arise, patient may contact practice or be re-referred to dietetics following the routine referral process.

Appendix 1

Draft letters to patients from GP practice

Example letter to patients from GP practice Type 1

<Date>

Private and Confidential

<Patient Name>

<Patient Address>

Dear <Patient Name>

Prescribing of Gluten Free foods on prescription

On 3 December 2025, following a 12-week engagement process, the NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)* made the decision to no longer fund Gluten Free bread and mixes prescribing (except for the most at risk of clinical harm by not adhering to a gluten free diet).

Gluten-free prescribing was one of several areas under review by the ICB who are assessing a range of services in relation to organisational priorities, the needs of citizens, clinical outcomes, cost-effectiveness, and the provision of essential services.

The ICB made the decision stating that “in a difficult financial climate we have a responsibility to balance the needs of all our communities and ensure that we are delivering the best possible value for money within the resources available.”

You are currently prescribed Gluten Free bread or flour mixes; these will no longer be available to you on an NHS prescription in line with the new local policy.

Gluten-free foods can be purchased from various sources, such as supermarkets, community pharmacies, or online retailers. Coeliac UK offers a wide range of helpful advice and guidance on their website: [Homepage - Coeliac UK](#)

More information on the decision of NHS South Yorkshire ICB to withdraw prescribing and the engagement process can be found on the ICB website: <https://southyorkshire.icb.nhs.uk/news/board-decision-gluten-free-prescribing>

A set of ‘frequently asked questions’ is available here: [Gluten Free FAQs](#)

If you have any queries or concerns regarding this change, please contact the SY ICB syicb-sheffield.icbcomplaints@nhs.net.

Yours sincerely

*The NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) is the statutory NHS body responsible for planning, commissioning, and funding NHS services in South Yorkshire

Example letter to patients from GP practice Type 2

<Date>

Private and Confidential

<Patient Name>

<Patient Address>

Dear <Patient Name>

Prescribing of Gluten-Free foods on prescription

What this means:

- **You will no longer be able to get gluten-free bread or flour mixes on an NHS prescription.**
- **This change was decided by the local NHS organisation (the ICB).**
- **You can still buy gluten-free foods in shops and online.**
- **If you have any queries or concerns, you can contact the ICB using the email in this letter.**

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Gluten-free prescribing was one of a number of areas under review by the ICB who are assessing a range of services in relation to organisational priorities, the needs of citizens, clinical outcomes, cost-effectiveness, and the provision of essential services.

The ICB made the decision stating that “in a difficult financial climate we have a responsibility to balance the needs of all our communities and ensure that we are delivering the best possible value for money within the resources available.”

You are currently prescribed gluten free bread or flour mixes; these will no longer be available to you on an NHS prescription because of the new local guidance.

Gluten-free foods can be purchased from various sources, such as supermarkets, community pharmacies, or online retailers. Coeliac UK offers a wide range of helpful advice and guidance on their website: [Homepage - Coeliac UK](#)

If you would like to read more about this decision, you can visit the NHS South Yorkshire ICB website: <https://southyorkshire.icb.nhs.uk/news/board-decision-gluten-free-prescribing>

A set of ‘frequently asked questions’ is available here: [Gluten Free FAQs](#)

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