# NHS launches comprehensive medicines reset to improve value and access



NHS England is advancing a "medicines reset" initiative aimed at maximising the benefits of prescribed medicines for patients and taxpayers alike. The programme, backed by experts from the University of York and the Department of Health and Social Care, seeks to optimise the use of existing treatments to improve health outcomes more effectively. The scheme underscores the potential to go beyond current practices with adequate funding, ensuring that patients derive greater value from their medicines and that public funds are used more efficiently.

This initiative comes amid broader efforts to enhance the affordability and accessibility of medicines within the NHS. A cornerstone of these efforts is the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing, Access, and Growth (VPAG), a landmark deal involving the UK government, NHS England, and the pharmaceutical industry. This agreement is forecast to save the NHS £14 billion over five years by capping the growth in branded medicine sales while simultaneously unlocking improved patient access to innovative treatments. The scheme also aims to bolster the UK’s life sciences sector by supporting investment in clinical trials and pharmaceutical manufacturing domestically.

In recent years, the NHS has demonstrated considerable success in negotiating better medicines prices, notably saving £1.2 billion over three years. Much of these savings stem from bulk procurement of generic alternatives, exemplified by the cost-effective sourcing of adalimumab, a widely used medication. Such strategies enable the NHS to sustain high-quality care while controlling expenditure, reflecting a broader commitment to financial sustainability balanced with patient-centric service improvements.

Moreover, NHS efforts extend to ensuring patients correctly adhere to their new medications. Initiatives such as the New Medicine Service (NMS) pharmacy scheme have proven valuable, with NIHR-funded research attributing £558 million in NHS savings to improved patient adherence and consequent reductions in avoidable hospital admissions. This scheme supports patients starting long-term treatments, highlighting the NHS's focus on not just accessing medicines but also optimising their real-world use and outcomes.

Additionally, NHS England runs a Medicines Repurposing Programme, which explores innovative uses of existing licensed medicines that fall outside their initial marketing authorisations. This tailored approach seeks to enhance clinical results, patient experience, and value for money by unlocking new therapeutic potentials without necessarily developing entirely new drugs.

Complementing these initiatives is a government-established pathway ensuring timely introduction and funding of new medicines in the NHS. This pathway includes managed access arrangements to collect real-world evidence on drug effectiveness and mandates NHS commissioners to fund medicines recommended by NICE evaluations within a three-month window, reinforcing rapid patient access to new therapies.

Collectively, these strategies illustrate a comprehensive NHS approach to managing medicines—from cost containment and service innovation to patient adherence and clinical optimisation—positioning the health service to better serve the population’s needs within constrained budgets.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/nhs-england-university-of-york-experts-department-of-health-and-social-care-b1250765.html), [[6]](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/medicines-repurposing-programme-eligibility-and-prioritisation-criteria/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nhs-set-to-save-7-billion-thanks-to-world-leading-medicine-pricing-scheme), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/landmark-deal-to-boost-nations-health-and-save-nhs-14-billion)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.england.nhs.uk/2022/07/nhs-saves-1-2-billion-on-medicines-over-three-years/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/case-studies/supporting-patients-to-take-their-new-drugs-correctly/28060)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/medicines-repurposing-programme-eligibility-and-prioritisation-criteria/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[7]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introducing-new-medicines-in-the-nhs-in-the-uk/introducing-new-medicines-in-the-nhs-in-the-uk-pathway)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/nhs-england-university-of-york-experts-department-of-health-and-social-care-b1250765.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nhs-set-to-save-7-billion-thanks-to-world-leading-medicine-pricing-scheme> - The UK government announced that the NHS is set to save £7 billion by the end of 2023 through a five-year agreement with the pharmaceutical industry. This agreement, known as the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access (VPAS), aims to keep branded medicine costs affordable for the NHS while improving patient access to innovative treatments. The scheme caps the growth of branded medicine sales and supports the UK's life sciences sector.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/landmark-deal-to-boost-nations-health-and-save-nhs-14-billion> - A landmark deal between the UK government, NHS England, and the pharmaceutical industry is set to save the NHS £14 billion over five years. The new Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing, Access, and Growth (VPAG) will improve access to cutting-edge treatments, support the financial sustainability of the health service, and advance the UK life sciences sector. The agreement introduces mechanisms to support lower industry payment rates for innovative medicines and includes significant investment in UK clinical trials and manufacturing.
4. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2022/07/nhs-saves-1-2-billion-on-medicines-over-three-years/> - The NHS has saved taxpayers £1.2 billion over three years by negotiating better prices for hundreds of hospital medicines. A significant portion of these savings comes from bulk-buying generic versions of adalimumab, a drug used to treat various conditions. This approach has enabled the NHS to provide high-quality patient care while achieving substantial savings.
5. <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/case-studies/supporting-patients-to-take-their-new-drugs-correctly/28060> - An evaluation by NIHR-funded researchers found that the New Medicine Service (NMS) pharmacy scheme improved patients' adherence to new medications and resulted in cost savings to the NHS of £558 million. The NMS supports patients starting new medications for long-term conditions, helping them take their medicine correctly and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.
6. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/medicines-repurposing-programme-eligibility-and-prioritisation-criteria/> - The NHS England Medicines Repurposing Programme identifies and progresses opportunities to use existing licensed medicines in new ways. The programme aims to improve clinical outcomes, patient experience, and value for money through a tailored support programme, considering medicines with potential repurposed uses not within existing marketing authorisations.
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introducing-new-medicines-in-the-nhs-in-the-uk/introducing-new-medicines-in-the-nhs-in-the-uk-pathway> - The UK government has outlined a pathway for introducing new medicines into the NHS. This includes recommendations with managed access, allowing for the gathering of further evidence about how well the medicine works. Routine funding is provided for medicines recommended in NICE technology appraisals or highly specialised technology evaluations, with NHS commissioners legally required to fund these medicines within three months of the publication of final guidance.