

Update for Care Homes: Oral Nutritional Supplement (ONS) Replacement in Care Homes – Effective 1st September 2025

From **1st September 2025**, a new prescribing approach promoting **food-based alternatives to Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS)** will be introduced in care homes across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR).

1.1 Key Prescribing Update

Routine prescribing of ONS for care home residents is not recommended, unless one of the following clinical criteria is met:

- **The resident is tube-fed** (e.g., PEG, NG, or JEJ feeding) – For queries, contact the Home Enteral Nutrition Service (HENS): hens.team@nhs.net | 0116 222 7161
- **The resident has a diagnosed swallowing difficulty (dysphagia)** requiring thickened ONS and has been identified as malnourished using a validated screening tool (e.g., MUST) – Care home should refer directly to Community Dietetics using the care home referral form.
- **Exceptional Circumstances:** In rare cases where homemade nutritional supplements are unsuitable, a relevant healthcare professional may recommend prescribed ONS. This must be based on a clinical assessment, with a clear rationale to justify that food-based alternatives are inappropriate and how ONS will meet the patient's specific nutritional needs for a defined period.

1.2 Training Opportunities

Below are the upcoming engagement sessions that have already been scheduled:

Date		Time	Venue
26 th August	Care Home Subgroup	10:30 am	Virtual
1 st September	County Care Home Provider Forum	10:30 am	Virtual
3 rd September	Rutland Care Home Provider Forum	2:00 pm	Oakham Enterprise Park
9 th September	Primary Care Webinar	4:00 pm	Virtual
25 th September	LLR Registered Managers Network	10:45 am	NSPCC Centre
14 th October	City Care Home Provider Forum	11:30	Virtual

If you would like additional support, we will be holding virtual informal Q&A sessions that you can join. Links for these sessions will be shared closer to the date.

Date	Time	Link	Date	Time	Link
2 nd September	1:15 – 2:15	Join the meeting	17 th September	11:00 – 12:00	Join the meeting
4 th September	11:00 – 12:00	Join the meeting	19 th September	9:30 – 10:30	Join the meeting
8 th September	11:15 – 12:15	Join the meeting	22 nd September	11:00 – 12:00	Join the meeting
10 th September	10:00 – 11:00	Join the meeting	26 th September	10:00 – 11:00	Join the meeting

Further refresher training sessions will also be scheduled. If you require extra support or bespoke training, please contact us – we will do our best to arrange a session with you, either virtually or face-to-face.

1.3 Resources and Support

The resources, including the pathway and recipe guides, will be available on the APC website and Providing Care website by September.

- The LLR Managing Malnutrition in Care Homes Pathway and recipe guides will be shared with practices and care homes
- For urgent dysphagia-related ONS needs or guidance on pre-thickened dysphagia specific ONS, refer to [Managing Adult Malnutrition in Primary Care Guidelines \(Appendix 3\)](#).

1.4 Contact Information

- Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetic Service: lpt.dietitiansphcadmin@nhs.net | 0116 222 7170

Key Updates Effective from the 1st of September 2025

ONS Replacement in Care-homes scheme to be launched via phased approach commencing in Primary Care from 1/9/25 with acute + community hospital discharges following at a later date. From this date:

New care-home residents AND existing residents not on ONS:

- All new patients in care-homes to be assessed for Malnutrition risk using this pathway and follow appropriate management plan as per the pathway (except for acute + community hospital discharges- see below).
- All existing patients in care-homes not on ONS to be assessed for Malnutrition risk using this pathway and follow appropriate management plan as per the Pathway.

Care-home resident already on ONS:

- All existing patients already on ONS and under the care of a community dietitian (Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetics Service) to continue with ONS until scheduled review where suitability to switch to home-made replacement drinks will be assessed by the dietitian.
- All existing patients already on ONS but NOT under the care of a community dietitian (Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetics Service) to be referred via Care-home- to Dietetics direct referral form for assessing suitability .

Acute/Community hospital discharges:

- As part of a phased launch, all patients who are discharged from acute or community hospitals on TTO's- to take these as prescribed until further notice.
- If a further ongoing prescription is requested on discharge, GP to review and prescribe if appropriate as per current practice. If no further ongoing prescription is required, then care-home to assess for Malnutrition risk using this pathway and follow appropriate management plan as per the pathway.