



Dear Colleague

## DISCONTINUATION OF PRINT COPIES OF BRITISH NATIONAL FORMULARY (BNF) AND BRITISH NATIONAL FORMULARY FOR CHILDREN (BNFC)

### Summary

1. This Circular advises NHS Boards and healthcare professionals that print copies of the British National Formulary (BNF) and BNF for Children (BNFC) will no longer be provided by NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) and gives a reminder of how to access the digital versions.

### Background

2. [Circular PCA\(P\)\(2013\)3](#), issued in January 2013 provided details on how to access the BNF/BNFC Apps for the latest prescribing information. [Circular PCA\(P\)\(2019\)9](#), issued in May 2019, provided details for community pharmacy contractors on how to access the Medicines Complete package of resources, including the BNF/BNFC.

3. Eligible healthcare professionals have been able to request annual print copies of both the BNF and BNFC through their health board, with the ordering and distribution coordinated by NSS. In recent years, NSS has worked closely with health boards to significantly reduce the number of print copies distributed and promote the switch to digital versions. There has been a continued increase in usage of the digital formats of BNF and BNFC content.

4. The last print versions supplied were BNF 86 and BNFC 2023/24, distributed in autumn 2023.

7 February 2024

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### Addresses

#### For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards

#### For information

NHS Directors of Pharmacy

Chief Executive, NHS National Services Scotland

Chief Executive, NHS Education for Scotland

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### Enquiries to:

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## Details

5. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has taken a decision to end the existing arrangements to supply print editions of BNF and BNFC to NHS organisations from 2024.

6. The benefits of moving to digital content include:

- Clinical safety – The digital resources are updated monthly providing important clinical and safety information in a timely way. Print versions of the BNF and BNFC are provided once a year and are out of date by the time they are received by users.
- Environmental impact – Printing and distribution of the BNF and BNFC has a significant carbon footprint.
- Digital transformation – Switching to digital BNF and BNFC content supports the commitment to digital transformation.

7. NHS Scotland users can continue to access the BNF/BNFC free of charge either via NICE at [BNF \(British National Formulary\) | NICE](#) or through the BNF/BNFC App.

8. In addition, BNF content can be integrated into a local formulary by using BNF on FormularyComplete; see <http://www.bnf.org> for details.

## Medicines Complete

9. NHS Scotland OpenAthens accounts are available to everyone who helps provide health and social care in Scotland in conjunction with the NHS and local authorities, including many in the third and independent sectors.

10. All eligible users can access the BNF/BNFC via Medicines Complete which provides online access to some of the world's leading drug and healthcare references. Details about the publications available and arrangements for accessing Medicines Complete is contained at **Annex A**.

## BNF online

11. The BNF and BNFC can both be accessed free of charge online at <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/>

## BNF app

12. The BNF app is available for both iOS and Android at: <https://www.pharmaceuticalpress.com/bnf-publications/bnf-bnfc-app/> or search in the app store.

13. The app is completely free to use; it does not require a NHS email address and will work without an internet connection once downloaded.

14. Updates are released on a monthly basis, so prescribers always have the most up-to-date information. Users need to be online to receive the monthly updates. The BNF app asks for an email address on first launch, but this can be any email address.

### **Actions**

15. NHS Boards are asked to bring this Circular to the attention of NHS staff, GP practices, community pharmacy contractors and any other groups who usually receive print copies of BNF/BNFC.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alison Strath', is positioned above the typed name.

**Alison Strath**  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer  
Pharmacy & Medicines Division

**ACCESS TO BNF/BNFC AND MEDICINES COMPLETE****Web version**

You can access the BNF/BNFC from The Knowledge Network <https://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk> using an NHS Scotland OpenAthens account.

**Please note:** password free access is available on NHS premises.

BNF/BNFC is hosted on the Medicines Complete platform provided by Pharmaceutical Press. Other resources available from this platform are:

- eMartindale: The Complete Drug Reference
- Handbook of drug administration via Enteral Feeding Tubes
- Kucer's the use of Antibiotics
- Palliative Care Drugs Formulary
- Stockley's Drug Interactions

**App**

The quickest way to access the app is to search for BNF/BNFC on your app store or visit <https://www.pharmaceuticalpress.com/bnf-publications/bnf-bnfc-app/> as highlighted above.

Steps to get the app are:

1. Open up the app and select register/Log in:



2. Sign-in or create an account:

14:57  
App Store  
Log In

**BNF**  
**BNFC**

Email

Password

**Log in**

[Forgot password](#) [Create an account](#)

3. Enter login details and job role, not using for commercial purposes tickbox:

14:58  
App Store  
Log In

**BNF**  
**BNFC**

Email

Job role

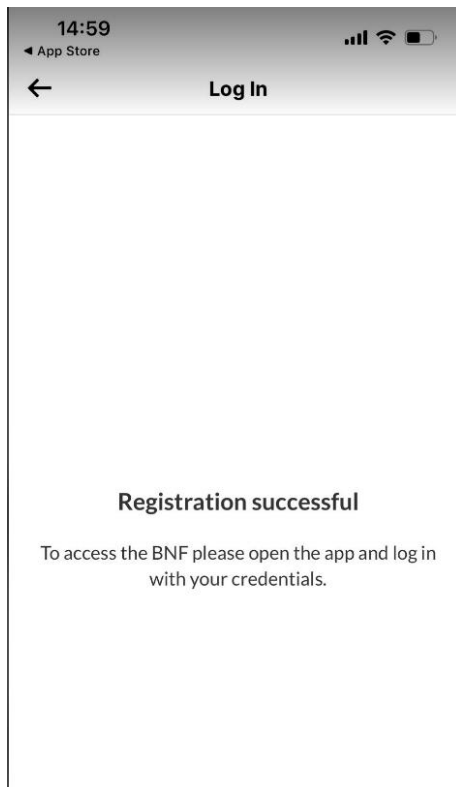
Create password ⓘ

Confirm password

I'm not using this app for commercial purposes

**Back** **Register**

4. Registration successful message:



5. After downloading the app, you may need to close and reopen it to start using it but this should only take a few seconds.

If you have any issues accessing the web version or the app, or if you require more information about getting an OpenAthens account or about what is available from The Knowledge Network, please contact your local librarian or The Knowledge Network helpdesk at [knowledge@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:knowledge@nes.scot.nhs.uk)