

**Prior Approval Process**  
**Double Red Drug Requests**

The Northamptonshire Prescribing Advisory Group (NPAG) designates medicines as Green, Amber (1 or 2), Red or Double Red.

A full explanation of these categories can be found at [Traffic light explanation](#)

A “Double Red” designation is assigned to medicines that are less suitable for prescribing and are not recommended in primary or secondary care due to the lack of good evidence for clinical- or cost-effectiveness, or due to the availability of more suitable alternatives. These medicines will not be included in the PCT Prescribing Guidelines or the Hospitals Trust Formulary.

A clinician may make an individual request to use a double red drug by completing a [Prior Approval Drug Form](#) and submitting it to [Priorapproval.northants@nhs.net](mailto:Priorapproval.northants@nhs.net)

The Prior Approval process should not be confused with Individual Funding Requests (IFR); the latter are exactly what they say i.e. requests for funding for individuals who are “exceptional” and where funding agreed for one patient would not set a precedent for a cohort of patients with at the same stage of the same condition.

Clearly, although requests for double red drugs will be uncommon, exceptionality does not have to be demonstrated. For example, there may be a number of patients who have exhausted all other treatment options, for whom a trial of a double red drug may be agreed.

Prior Approval requests for double red drugs will only be agreed if all other reasonable interventions (drug or otherwise) have been unsuccessful and clinicians must demonstrate this on the form. Any appropriate tests to identify underlying reasons for the condition should also have been undertaken e.g. iron deficiency in Restless Leg Syndrome should have been ruled out.

Examples (not exhaustive) of criteria for the most commonly requested double red drugs are listed below –

<b>Drug</b>	<b>Previously tried and failed / not tolerated</b>	<b>Reason for requesting</b>
Desloratadine	All other oral antihistamines	
Donepezil orodispersible		Swallowing difficulties
Escitalopram	All other SSRIs or related ADs	
Orlistat	Dietary measures	Trial prior to bariatric surgery
Rosuvastatin	All other statins	Clear indication for statin / familial hyperlipidaemia