

Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Area Prescribing Committee (BLMK APC)

Newsletter Number 12, December 2023

Welcome to the December 2023 BLMK Area Prescribing Committee newsletter. This newsletter contains a summary of the key recommendations and reflects the output from the twelfth BLMK APC, held on 6th December 2023.

For full details of Joint Formulary additions / amendments – see separate November 2023 [Formulary Newsletter](#)

Click [here](#) to access the Bedfordshire & Luton Joint Formulary
Click [here](#) to access the Milton Keynes Joint Formulary

BLMK Medicines Optimisation Team Website

All approved BLMK APC documents will be uploaded to the website and all current approved JPC/MKPAG* documents will also remain on the website as before.

Medicines Optimisation Team website:

<https://medicines.bedfordshirelutonandmiltonkeynes.icb.nhs.uk/>

Searching the website:

All documents referred to within the Newsletter (where appropriate) will be available shortly on the website.

The website has an easy to use search function which should make it easy to find the information you are looking for. If you have trouble searching the website or if you have any comments / suggestions, please do let us know - contact either samantha.golton@nhs.net (Website Manager) or sandra.mcgroarty@nhs.net (Website Pharmacist Clinical Lead).

*Bedfordshire and Luton Joint Prescribing Committee (JPC) / Milton Keynes Prescribing Advisory Group (MKPAG)

The following organisations contribute to and participate in the BLMK APC – Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board; Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust; Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust; Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust; East London NHS Foundation Trust; Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

TREATMENT / PRESCRIBING GUIDELINES

Prescribing Guidance for SGLT2 inhibitors in Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction (HFpEF)

New [prescribing guidance](#) has been developed to support prescribers in primary care when considering treatment with a SGLT2 inhibitor (dapagliflozin and empagliflozin) for patients with HFpEF. The formulary traffic light for this indication is **GREEN**. Note that the formulary traffic light for patients with reduced ejection fraction remains **SpA** and requires initiation / recommendation by a specialist.

**NEW
GUIDANCE**

BLMK Antimicrobial Prescribing Primary Care Guidelines

The [BLMK primary care Antimicrobial Prescribing Guidelines](#) has been revised to include updated content on the management of otitis media and otitis externa.

**UPDATED
GUIDANCE**

Linezolid Prescribing Guidance

The [prescribing information for primary care prescribers](#) has been updated. This information is provided to facilitate the prescribing, supply and monitoring of linezolid from primary care in Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICS. Linezolid may only be prescribed in primary care under the specialist direction of a Consultant Microbiologist, in order to prevent a hospital admission. The formulary status of linezolid was agreed to be amended on the MK formulary to achieve alignment across BLMK, with **SpA** traffic light agreed for the ICS.

**UPDATED
GUIDANCE**

Guideline for Treatment and Prevention of Migraine / Tension-Type Headache

The previous MK guidance on the management of migraine and tension-type headache in primary care has been revised, updated and extended for use across BLMK. This includes treatment of acute attacks and for the prevention of migraine and tension-type headache (excluding anti-CRGP medicines).

**UPDATED
and extended
across
BLMK ICS**

Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) update

The [guidance on choice of CGM devices](#) has been reviewed and updated to include children and young people with type 2 diabetes. This is applicable only if the person is being treated with two or more daily injections of insulin and CGM has been recommended by a diabetes specialist multi-disciplinary team (MDT).

**UPDATED
GUIDANCE**

SECONDARY CARE PRESCRIBING / COMMISSIONING ISSUES

Peginterferon for the treatment of polycythaemia vera and essential thrombocythaemia

The use of Peginterferon alfa-2a for the management of polycythaemia vera (PV) and essential thrombocythaemia (ET) was agreed as a treatment option in restricted patient groups who are not suitable for treatment with hydroxycarbamide or it is ineffective, contraindicated or not tolerated.

**NEW
TREATMENT**

Ulcerative colitis pathway

The [BLMK moderate to severe Ulcerative Colitis treatment pathway](#) has been updated to incorporate Mirikizumab, which was recently recommended by [NICE](#). Mirikizumab is an additional treatment option within the existing pathway.

UPDATED

Ankylosing Spondylitis and Non-radiographic Axial Spondyloarthritis pathway

UPDATED

The [BLMK Ankylosing Spondylitis and Non-radiographic Axial Spondyloarthritis pathway](#) has been updated to include two new treatments recently recommended by NICE ([Bimekizumab](#) and [Tofacitinib](#)). Bimekizumab and Tofacitinib are additional treatment options within the existing pathway.

Psoriatic arthritis pathway

UPDATED

The [BLMK treatment pathway for Active Psoriatic Arthritis](#) after inadequate response to DMARDs has been updated to include the recently published NICE TA recommendations for Bimekizumab. Bimekizumab is an additional treatment option within the existing pathway.

SHARED CARE GUIDELINES

The following shared care guidelines have been finalised and uploaded to the Medicines Optimisation website:

- [Management of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder \(ADHD\) in adults](#) – for use in adult patients in Milton Keynes, or in Bedfordshire and Luton patients referred under NHS right to choose, under the care of Psychiatry UK.
- [Lithium shared care guideline](#) – revised and updated shared care guidance for use across BLMK.

NEW / UPDATED
SHARED CARE
GUIDELINES

NICE TECHNOLOGY APPRAISAL GUIDANCE and GUIDELINES ISSUED / UPDATED

The following NICE Technology Appraisal Guidance (ICB Commissioned) have been published during the period 14th September to 22nd November 2023 inclusive:

Bimekizumab for treating active psoriatic arthritis Technology appraisal guidance [TA916] Published: 04 October 2023 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta916> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Bimekizumab for treating axial spondyloarthritis Technology appraisal guidance [TA918] Published: 11 October 2023 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta918> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Rimegepant for treating migraine Technology appraisal guidance [TA919] Published: 18 October 2023 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta919> (to be added to formularies with **GREEN** traffic light status – note **RED** traffic light status will be retained for Rimegepant for preventing migraine, NICE [TA906](#)).

Tofacitinib for treating active ankylosing spondylitis Technology appraisal guidance [TA920] Published: 18 October 2023 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta920> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Daridorexant for treating long-term insomnia Technology appraisal guidance [TA922] Published: 18 October 2023 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta922> (to be added to formularies with **GREEN** traffic light status).

Tirzepatide for treating type 2 diabetes Technology appraisal guidance [TA924] Published: 25 October 2023 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta924> (to be added to formularies with **GREEN** traffic light status).

Mirikizumab for treating moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis Technology appraisal guidance [TA925] Published: 25 October 2023 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta925> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Baricitinib for treating severe alopecia areata Technology appraisal guidance [TA926] Published: 25 October 2023 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta926> (NOT RECOMMENDED).

Ranibizumab for treating diabetic macular oedema Technology appraisal guidance [TA274] Published: 27 February 2013 Last updated: 26 October 2023 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta274> (on both formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Empagliflozin for treating chronic heart failure with preserved or mildly reduced ejection fraction Technology appraisal guidance [TA929] Published: 01 November 2023 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta929> (added to formularies with **GREEN** traffic light status).

[Click here](#) to access **all** technology appraisal guidelines - ICB and NHSE Commissioned (14th September to 22nd November 2023 inclusive)

NICE Guidelines:

NICE have published several NICE Guidelines since September 2023 – [click here](#) to access these guidelines.

MEDICINES SAFETY DRUG UPDATES (DSU) AND PATIENT SAFETY ALERTS

The APC received a Primary Care Medicines Safety Update and an update from the BLMK ICS Medicines Safety Group (MSG).

This update focussed on the primary care response to the MHRA Drug Safety Updates ([August](#), [September](#) and [October](#) 2023). In particular:

Methotrexate: advise patients to take precautions in the sun to avoid photosensitivity reactions (August 2023)

Action(s) taken: Links added to the Formularies. The alert will be circulated to the relevant teams in the Trusts that use methotrexate (Gastroenterology, Rheumatology and Dermatology). This will also be included in the BLMK newsletter for primary care. Information about photosensitivity is already flagged within SystemOne.

Fluoroquinolone antibiotics: suicidal thoughts and behaviour (September 2023)

Action(s) taken: Discussed in antimicrobial stewardship group, including how ways of communicating risks of fluoroquinolone use to patients can be improved.

Statins: very infrequent reports of myasthenia gravis (September 2023)

Action(s) taken: Links added to the Formularies and item brought to November MSG for raising awareness/noting.

Valproate: dispense full packs of valproate-containing medicines (October 2023)

Action(s) taken: Discussed at MSG: SystemOne will only allow prescribers to administer full packs therefore this recommendation cannot be deviated from in Primary Care. The group discussed difficulties in mental health settings, as whole pack dispensing may be inappropriate for patients going on short term leave or for those at risk of suicide or overdose.

Isotretinoin (Roaccutane ▼): introduction of new safety measures, including additional oversight of the initiation of treatment for patients under 18 years of age (October 2023)

Action(s) taken: Reflections from valproate workstreams will feed into isotretinoin as the principles for avoidance of pregnancy on this medicine are similar. A review of ePACT data has identified a small amount of prescribing – patients are in the process of being repatriated back to specialist (NB: isotretinoin is **RED** on both formularies).

Projects being undertaken by the Medicines Safety Group (MSG) include:

- **Sodium Valproate – Pregnancy prevention forms.** The MSG has formed a task and finish group to develop a pathway to ensure women of childbearing age have a pregnancy prevention form completed. The first subgroup meeting was held on 27th November and engaged systemwide partners. Learning from national workstreams is being fed into this project, e.g. the Henrietta Hughes report, which covers a wider range of teratogenic medicines and how risk of exposure in pregnancy can be mitigated. This group will also review and implement the actions laid out in the recent [NPSA alert](#) on Valproate.

- **‘Bounceback’ forms** - the group is in the process of exploring a BLMK wide mechanism for bounceback of inappropriate requests to prescribe medicines in Primary Care. The group is working with the Trusts to establish a reliable and sustainable method of receipt of forms at the Trusts and develop a clear pathway for this.
- **Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF) workstream** - shared learning is ongoing via MSG as PSIRF embeds into practice. It is anticipated that the main providers will come on board with PSIRF by December 2023 and smaller contractors in the new contract year from April 2024.
- **SystemOne local Formulary** - the Medicines Optimisation team are in the process of building a local Formulary for SystemOne (S1) which is expected to be available to all practices by the end of the year. It is hoped that this will mitigate against prescribing and dosing errors for commonly prescribed medicines, aid Formulary adherence and reduce inter-practice variation in selection of medicines.

#MedsSafetyWeek (6-12 November)

The Medicines Safety week this year had a focus on who can report, to highlight that this is not limited to healthcare professionals. Patients, doctors, nurses, and pharmacists all have a key role to play in the cycle of medicines safety. Campaign videos were released and are available in multiple languages.

ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

An update on primary care antimicrobial prescribing was provided for the Committee:

- Primary care prescribing data indicates that total antibiotic prescribing remains raised. It was noted that the data is based on a rolling 12 month period, so it is expected to remain raised until >12 months have passed since last year’s group A strep outbreak. It is therefore not expected to come down until approximately April 2024.
- S1 local formulary – it is planned to build an antimicrobial formulary, including information on indications and appropriate course length, into the S1 formulary.

Reminder: A new BLMK antibiotics guidelines website has been developed, which may be accessed [here](#).

BLMK APC 2024 MEETING DATES

Wednesday 28th February 2024
 Wednesday 1st May 2024
 Wednesday 3rd July 2024
 Wednesday 25th September 2024
 Wednesday 4th December 2024

OTHER NEWS

Use of Scriptswitch/Optimise Rx

To further enhance the communication of BLMK APC advice to GPs, the BLMK ICB medicines optimisation team **are actively reviewing the messages on NetFormulary and Optimise Rx** to highlight when BLMK APC guidance is available and including a hyperlink to the [BLMK Medicines Optimisation website](#). Please advise us if you notice any issues.

Contact Us:  anne.graeff@nhs.net and taiya.large1@nhs.net