

## Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Area Prescribing Committee (BLMK APC) Newsletter Number 15, July 2024

Welcome to the July 2024 BLMK Area Prescribing Committee newsletter. This newsletter contains a summary of the key recommendations, and reflects the output from, the BLMK APC meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024.

For full details of Joint Formulary additions / amendments – see separate [June 2024 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 current, approved BLMK APC documents are available on the BLMK Medicines website (current documents, that were previously approved by the JPC/MKPAG\*, can also be found on the website, where applicable).

#### Medicines Optimisation Team website:

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

#### Searching the website:

All documents referred to within this 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](mailto:samantha.golton@nhs.net) (Website Manager) or [sandra.mcgroarty@nhs.net](mailto: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

### BLMK Lipid Guidance

A new local pathway has been developed for lipid management in adults for the secondary prevention of cardiovascular events. This includes secondary prevention of lipid management for people with established cardiovascular disease, including those with statin intolerance.

NEW  
GUIDANCE

### BLMK Primary Care Antimicrobial Prescribing Guideline

The [primary care antimicrobial prescribing guideline](#) has been updated to include recent recommendations from [NICE](#) on the management of bacterial meningitis and meningococcal disease. This includes guidance on the choice of pre-hospital antibiotics for management of strongly suspected cases of meningitis.

UPDATED

### Drospirenone Prescribing Support Information

New prescribing guidance has been developed to support prescribers in primary care when considering prescribing drospirenone (Slynd®) as a second line choice of progestogen only pill (POP). The formulary traffic light for drospirenone is **SpIS** (initial 3 months' prescription, and follow up at 3 months, to be provided by the specialist\*) and it is recommended within BLMK for women in whom desogestrel is not appropriate after a suitable trial (minimum 3 months) and where other methods of contraception including long-acting reversible methods are contraindicated, have been declined or are not suited.

NEW  
GUIDANCE

\*in this context, a specialist is defined as a "Sexual Health Specialist or a Primary care clinician who has relevant expertise and is clinically competent to prescribe"

### Emergency contraception guidance

New guidance has been developed to support clinicians in primary care when prescribing and issuing [emergency contraception](#). This includes information on both intrauterine and oral methods of emergency contraception and contains links to information provided by FSRH and CKS.

NEW  
GUIDANCE

### Additional guidelines updated / uploaded to the website

The BLMK [primary care prescribing guidance for contraception](#) is now available on the Medicines website. This includes information on all forms of contraception including oral, injectable, intrauterine and topical and has been developed in conjunction with local specialists. Separate guidance for emergency contraception is also available (see above).

WEBSITE  
UPDATES

The BLMK [Continence Appliance Prescribing Guidelines](#) are also now available on the Medicines website following a collaborative piece of work by local continence specialists and approval of the guidance at the May APC.

## SECONDARY CARE PRESCRIBING / COMMISSIONING ISSUES

### Migraine pathway update

The [migraine prevention pathway](#) has been updated to include new [NICE TA](#) recommendations on atogepant. In addition, the formulary traffic light status of the oral anti-CGRP agents, atogepant and rimegepant was agreed to be amended to **SpIS** (initial 3 months' prescription, and review at 12 weeks, to be provided by the specialist prior to continuation in primary care). NB: traffic light remains **RED** for the injectable treatments in the migraine prevention pathway and **GREEN** for rimegepant for the treatment of [acute migraine](#).

UPDATED

## SHARED CARE GUIDELINES

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

NEW / UPDATED  
SHARED CARE  
GUIDELINES

For patients under the care of the Renal specialists at Bedfordshire Hospital NHS Trust only:

- [Azathioprine and Mercaptopurine](#) for treatment of Autoimmune Renal Disease.
- [Mycophenolate Mofetil and Mycophenolic Acid](#) for treatment of Autoimmune Renal Disease.

For patients under the care of the Renal Unit at East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust only:

- [Sevelamer carbonate](#) for Hyperphosphataemia in Adult Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease.
- [Lanthanum](#) for Hyperphosphataemia in Adult Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease.
- [Sucroferric oxyhydroxide](#) for Hyperphosphataemia in Adult Patients with End Stage Renal Failure Requiring Renal Replacement Therapy.
- [Cinacalcet](#) for use in Secondary Hyperparathyroidism in Adults with End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) Requiring Renal Replacement Therapy.

## NICE TECHNOLOGY APPRAISAL GUIDANCE and GUIDELINES ISSUED / UPDATED

**The following NICE Technology Appraisal Guidance (ICB Commissioned) have been published during the period 18 April 2024 until 19 June 2024 inclusive:**

Gefapixant for treating refractory or unexplained chronic cough (terminated appraisal) Technology appraisal Reference number: TA969 Published: 30 April 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta969> (added to formularies with **DNP** (do not prescribe) formulary status).

Remdesivir and tixagevimab plus cilgavimab for treating COVID-19 Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA971 Published: 08 May 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta971> (NB: remdesivir is **RED** on the formularies; tixagevimab plus cilgavimab added to formularies with **DNP** formulary status).

Atogepant for preventing migraine Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA973 Published: 15 May 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta973> (added to formularies with **SpIS** formulary status)

Ranibizumab for treating choroidal neovascularisation associated with pathological myopia Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA298 Published: 27 November 2013 Last updated: 20 May 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta298> (minor update to guidance – ranibizumab remains **RED** on the formularies).

Ranibizumab and pegaptanib for the treatment of age-related macular degeneration Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA155 Published: 27 August 2008 Last updated: 20 May 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta155> (minor update to guidance – ranibizumab remains **RED** on the formularies).

Ranibizumab for treating visual impairment caused by macular oedema secondary to retinal vein occlusion Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA283 Published: 22 May 2013 Last updated: 20 May 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta283> (minor update to guidance – ranibizumab remains **RED** on the formularies).

[Click here](#) to access **all** technology appraisal guidelines - ICB and NHSE Commissioned (18<sup>th</sup> April until 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024 inclusive)

### **NICE Guidelines:**

NICE have published the following NICE Guideline since May 2024 - [click here](#) to access the guideline.

## 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 ([February](#), [April](#) and [May 2024](#)) and CAS alerts. In particular:

**Pseudoephedrine: very rare risk of posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) and reversible cerebral vasoconstriction syndrome (RCVS) (DSU, February 2024)**

**Actions(s) taken:** Linked to Formulary entries for information. Pseudoephedrine is not a prescribable medicine in BLMK (self-care). Community pharmacy to advise on side-effects upon purchase.

**Codeine linctus (codeine oral solutions): reclassification to prescription-only medicine (DSU, February 2024)**

**Actions(s) taken:** Linked to Formularies for information. Potential need to monitor usage as patients seek prescriptions. A message had been sent via the primary care bulletin to raise awareness.

**Topical steroids: introduction of new labelling and a reminder of the possibility of severe side effects, including Topical Steroid Withdrawal Reactions (DSU, May 2024)**

**Actions(s) taken:** Linked to Formularies for information. Potency of topical steroids already noted on Formulary monographs.

**Potential contamination of some carbomer-containing lubricating eye products with Burkholderia cenocepacia - measures to reduce patient risk – updated 2<sup>nd</sup> April, recommendations stepped down ([CAS Alert, April 2024](#))**

**Actions(s) taken:** OptimiseRx messaging in primary care has been updated accordingly.

**Shortage of pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT) ([CAS alert, May 2024](#))**

**Actions(s) taken:** Action plans/memos have been circulated at both Trusts. The system is intending to source unlicensed pancreatin to support the shortage as other options cannot support uplift in demand (Nutrizyme 22 – out of stock until Aug 2024 and Pancrex V has insufficient stocks to support demand). NPSA alert linked to Formularies.

**Medicines Safety Group (MSG) Update:**

- **Actimorph engagement to use project** – an opioid stewardship group has been set up in Milton Keynes, with representation from different sectors managing patients with chronic pain. Workstreams include medicines safety with opioids. Bedfordshire Hospitals Trust is also in the process of setting up an opioid stewardship group.
- **Valproate task and finish group** – the group continues to meet monthly and providers are working on pathways and supplying contact details to support referral of patients back into services for review. A Valproate Primary Care Champions' event is being held in July to inform and engage PCNs with the valproate safe prescribing workstream.

## ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE UPDATE

An update on antimicrobial prescribing and targets was provided for the Committee:

- Total antibiotic prescribing for BLMK primary care is still above the national benchmark – this continues to be a target in the primary care prescribing incentive scheme.
- The antimicrobial formulary has been embedded into SystemOne to support the appropriate use of antimicrobials, including the use of shorter 5-day courses of amoxicillin.
- Paediatric prescribing – BLMK is a notable outlier in terms of antimicrobial prescribing in children and the ICB has the second highest levels of prescribing in primary care (nationally). This is a focus for review and action locally and regionally.
- Both acute trusts are on target to meet CQUIN targets for IV to oral switches.

A new national [5-year action plan for antimicrobial resistance 2024 to 2029](#) has been published and this is will be reviewed at the next antimicrobial resistance (AMR) group meeting.

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

## ADDITIONAL PAPERS/ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

The **BLMK Area Prescribing Committee 2023/2024 annual report** was approved by the Committee. Click [here](#) to view the report.

## BLMK APC 2024/2025 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024  
Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024  
Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025  
Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025  
Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025  
Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025  
Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

## OTHER NEWS

### Use of 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.

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