

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

Newsletter Number 16, October 2024

Welcome to the October 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 25th September 2024.

For full details of Joint Formulary additions / amendments – see separate [September 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 previous 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 (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

Paediatric asthma guidelines

UPDATED

The [BLMK paediatric asthma guidelines](#) have been revised and updated to reflect 2023 GINA (Global Initiative for Asthma) recommendations on the use of maintenance and reliever therapy (MART) regimens in those aged ≥12 years. The guidelines also include information on non-pharmacological asthma management, traditional SABA based regimens and local, formulary, inhaler choices.

Inhaled Corticosteroids in COPD Stepdown guidance

UPDATED and extended across BLMK ICS

The previous, separate guidance documents on stepping down inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) in patients with COPD have been reviewed, combined and updated. The new [BLMK guidance](#) incorporates two distinct steps:

- Step One: Assessment consultation (who could step down)
- Step Two: For people with COPD who do not need ICS (how to step down)

Self-monitoring of blood glucose (SMBG) for adults with diabetes managed in primary care

UPDATED and extended across BLMK ICS

Updated guidance on the appropriate [self-monitoring of blood glucose](#) has been developed. This includes information on which patients with Type 2 Diabetes should be monitoring their blood glucose, how frequently monitoring should be carried out, and suggested quantities of test strips to be prescribed.

Drospirenone prescribing support information

NEW GUIDANCE

A new [prescribing support information](#) document has been produced to aid primary care clinicians when prescribing drospirenone. Drospirenone has been recently added to the BLMK formularies as a second line progestogen only pill option. It has **AMBER SpiS** formulary status and requires initiation and stabilisation by a specialist*, prior to continuation in primary care (*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").

See [BLMK contraception prescribing guidance](#) for further details and contraception choices.

Additional guidelines updated / uploaded to the website

WEBSITE UPDATES

The [BLMK contraception prescribing guidance](#) has been updated to include a link to a [MHRA aide memoire](#): Pregnancy testing and contraception for pregnancy prevention during treatment with medicines of teratogenic potential.

SECONDARY CARE PRESCRIBING / COMMISSIONING ISSUES

Moderate to severe Ulcerative Colitis pathway

UPDATED

The [BLMK Ulcerative Colitis pathway](#) has been updated to include the recently published [NICE TA](#) recommendations on Risankizumab. Risankizumab is an additional treatment option for patients in whom a tumour necrosis factor (TNF)-alpha inhibitor has not worked, cannot be tolerated or is not suitable.

Atopic dermatitis pathway

UPDATED

The [BLMK Atopic Dermatitis treatment pathway](#) has been updated to include new [NICE TA](#) guidance on Lebrikizumab. Lebrikizumab is an additional treatment option within the pathway if dupilumab or tralokinumab would otherwise have been offered.

Iron chelators for myelodysplastic syndrome

NEW
GUIDANCE

New commissioning policy recommendations have been agreed on the use of iron chelation agents (deferasirox and desferrioxamine) for the management of iron overload in transfusion dependent patients with myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) in accordance with the agreed criteria. The recommendations were considered at the July meeting and may be accessed on the website [here](#).

SHARED CARE GUIDELINES

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

NEW / UPDATED
SHARED CARE
GUIDELINES

- [Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder \(ADHD\) in Adults](#) Shared Care Guideline (for use within Bedfordshire & Luton for patients under the care of ELFT; see [separate SCG](#) for adult patients in Milton Keynes under the care of Psychiatry UK).
- The [azathioprine fact sheet](#) (sub-document of the overarching Rheumatology shared care guideline, in use in Bedfordshire & Luton) has been revised and updated. See separate [Rheumatology shared care](#) document for patients in Milton Keynes.

WOUND CARE FORMULARY UPDATES

The following amendments have been made to the wound care formularies:

- UrgoKTwo reduced compression bandages (UrgoKTwo Latex Free, 2 layer compression kit, reduced compression, 18-25cm or 25-32cm ankle circumference (10cm bandages)) have been added to the wound care formularies for the management of venous leg ulcers and / or lower limb oedema.

FORMULARY
ADDITIONS &
WOUND CARE
GROUP
UPDATES

Additional updates from the Wound Management Formulary Steering Subgroup of the APC:

- The wound management formularies have recently been migrated to a new website, [Eolas Medical](#), which offers easier access to local guidelines as well as a host of other resources. An Eolas Medical app, with offline functionality, is also available.
- The Wound Management Formulary Steering Subgroup Terms of Reference (TOR) have been reviewed and updated. The revised TOR may be accessed [here](#).

NICE TECHNOLOGY APPRAISAL GUIDANCE and GUIDELINES ISSUED / UPDATED

The following NICE Technology Appraisal Guidance (ICB Commissioned) have been published during the period 20 June 2024 until 11 September 2024 inclusive:

Lebrikizumab for treating moderate to severe atopic dermatitis in people 12 years and over Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA986 Published: 10 July 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta986> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Tenecteplase for treating acute ischaemic stroke Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA990 Published: 24 July 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta990> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Abaloparatide for treating osteoporosis after menopause Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA991 Published: 07 August 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta991> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Relugolix for treating hormone-sensitive prostate cancer Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA995 Published: 14 August 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta995> (added to formularies with **AMBER SpA** traffic light status).

Linzagolix for treating moderate to severe symptoms of uterine fibroids Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA996 Published: 14 August 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta996> (added to formularies with **AMBER SpA** traffic light status).

Vibegron for treating symptoms of overactive bladder syndrome Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA999 Published: 04 September 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta999> (added to formularies with **GREEN** traffic light status).

Faricimab for treating visual impairment caused by macular oedema after retinal vein occlusion Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1004 Published: 11 September 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1004> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

[Click here](#) to access **all** technology appraisal guidelines - ICB and NHSE Commissioned (20 June 2024 until 11 September 2024 inclusive)

NICE Guidelines:

NICE have published several NICE Guidelines since July 2024 - [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 ([June](#), [July](#), and [September](#) 2024). In particular:

Topiramate (Topamax): introduction of new safety measures, including a Pregnancy Prevention Programme (PPP) (DSU, June 2024)

Action(s) taken: Linked to Formularies for information. OptimiseRx messaging in place for patients without an annual risk assessment. Whole pack dispensing will ensure patients receive a Patient Information Leaflet. SystemOne has a report to identify patients and there is an Arden's monitoring template available.

Warfarin: be alert to the risk of drug interactions with tramadol (DSU, June 2024)

Action(s) taken: Linked to formulary entries. There is a national OptimiseRx message in place that flags that this combination is not recommended whenever these drugs are co-prescribed. Patient counselling on the drug interaction is also strongly advised – patients are advised to inform their GP if considering stopping the tramadol or changing the dosing frequency themselves as this may affect their INR.

Epimax Ointment and Epimax Paraffin-Free Ointment: reports of ocular surface toxicity and ocular chemical injury (DSU, July 2024)

Action(s) taken: To be discussed at MSG in October. Linked to formulary entries; OptimiseRx messaging in place. Information included in preset directions when selecting from the formulary on SystemOne.

Valproate use in men: as a precaution, men and their partners should use effective contraception (DSU, September 2024)

Action(s) taken: Linked to formulary entries. OptimiseRx messaging in place. To be discussed further at the valproate task & finish group.

Kay-Cee-L® (potassium chloride 5mmol/5ml) syrup will be out of stock from late September 2024. The resupply date is to be confirmed ([CAS alert, July 2024](#))

Action(s) taken: Linked to Formulary for information. OptimiseRx messaging in place. Advice is included on: no new initiations to be started on Kay-Cee-L, and details on review of current prescriptions by NPPG.

Medicines Safety Group (MSG) Update:

- **Penicillamine / penicillin allergy mis-recording** – it has been identified locally and nationally that some patients with a *penicillin* allergy may have inadvertently had an allergy to *penicillamine* added to their patient record. Practices are reviewing their patients to ensure the correct allergy status has been recorded.
- **Valproate task and finish group** – following a Valproate Primary Care Champions meeting in July, practices are undertaking an audit to review their patients who have been prescribed Valproate. Further actions will be identified once the audits have been completed.

ADDITIONAL PAPERS/ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

The BLMK Area Prescribing Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) have been reviewed and updated. The revised TOR may be accessed [here](#).

BLMK APC 2024/2025 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Wednesday 4th December 2024
Wednesday 26th February 2025
Wednesday 7th May 2025
Wednesday 2nd July 2025
Wednesday 24th September 2025
Wednesday 3rd 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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