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Reminder - BLMK ICB Medication Training for Adult Social Care

Tier 1 – Foundation knowledge eLearning training modules hosted by PrescQIPP

The following courses are available free of charge:

- ⇒ Medicines use in care homes: course 1
- ⇒ Medicines use in care homes: course 2
- ⇒ Medicines use in care homes: course 3
- ⇒ Managing medicines for adults receiving social care in the community: course 1
- ⇒ Managing medicines for adults receiving social care in the community: course 2

Please click on link for [Tier 1 flyer](#) and [logon guide](#) for guidance on how to register.

Tier 2 – Focused on selected topics and local guidance/policies - New dates for 2024/25

The BLMK ICB Care Home Medicines Optimisation Team are pleased to facilitate the following virtual medication training sessions, for all adult social care (ASC) staff, delivered via MS Teams.

See our [ASC Medication Training – Tier 2 Flyer](#) for more information on how to join the events

Homely Remedies & Self-Care <i>*delivered*</i>	Tuesday 21 st May 2024, 14:30 –15:30
When Required (PRN) Medication <i>*delivered*</i>	Wednesday 10 th July 2024, 14:30 – 15:30
Covert Administration of Medication <i>*delivered*</i>	Tuesday 17 th September 2024, 14:30 – 15:30
Medicines Reconciliation & Transfers of Care	Wednesday 13 th November 2024, 14:30 – 15:30
Controlled Drugs (CDs) & Regulations in Care Homes	Tuesday 21 st January 2025, 14:30 – 15:30
Medication Safety, Governance & Safeguarding	Wednesday 19 th March 2025, 14:30 – 15:30

A big thank you to those that joined our Tier 2 session on ‘Covert Administration of Medication’, we had an amazing 351 devices join online!

We hope you can join us for the forthcoming topics, even if just for a refresher! All of our training information for Adult Social Care staff can be found via the website link:

[Adult Social Care Staff Only – BLMKICB Medicines Optimisation](#)

BLMK ICB Tier 3 Medication Champion Training - more dates!

In April & May this year our team very successfully held our first Tier 3 Medication Champion Training events for care home staff. As a result we have 53 new Medication Champions across BLMK. If you are interested in becoming a Medication Champion for your care home we have three more training dates available:

Forthcoming dates for Medication Champion days (9am - 3pm):

- Thursday 7th November 2024 - Priory House (Bedfordshire)
- Wednesday 20th November 2024 - Capwell Grange Nursing Home (Luton)
- Thursday 27th February 2025 - The Willows (Milton Keynes)



To be eligible to become a Medication Champion you must:

- ⇒ Complete the CORE Tier 1 PrescQIPP e-Learning training AND
- ⇒ Attend the Tier 2 online virtual medication sessions, where possible AND
- ⇒ Attend a Medication Champion Training day

To register for one of the above training dates, please click on the Eventbrite link below which also explains the event in more detail:

[Medication Champion Training for Care Home Staff | Eventbrite](#)

If you have any questions please contact the relevant care home team for your area. Contact details can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Updated BLMK ICB Covert Administration of Medication Guidance (2024)

The [BLMK ICB Covert Administration of Medication \(Adult\) Good Practice Guidance for care homes](#) has recently been reviewed and updated. The full guidance and appendix documents can be found [here](#).

Updates include:

- Section 9 Assessing Mental Capacity – process has been elaborated with new sub-headings. MCA assessment questions moved under Stage 1 of the assessment process
- Section 10 Best Interests Decision – process expanded with new sub-headings. Information on ADRT and LPA have been moved to this section.
- Section 11 Management plan – additional practical advice for safe covert administration.
- Section 13 Record Keeping - includes new information on care plan documentation.
- Section 14 Regular reviews – additional information to support homes with monthly reviews.
- Section 15 Legislation and Guidance – updated with new references
- Useful contacts updated and new IMCA information added
- Appendix 2 – updated version of MCA assessment form in order of 2-stage process in line with case law.
- Appendix 5 Review form – additional questions added to support the review process

[Overt administration of medication - Quick Reference Guide for care homes](#)

We have created a separate reference guide to support care homes, PCNs & GP Practices with managing residents/patients who may require their medicines to be administered overtly. This practice is different to covert administration of medication. Please click on the link above to access.

Reminder - BLMK ICB Homely Remedies toolkit

A homely remedy is a medicinal preparation used to treat minor ailments, which can be bought over the counter and does not require a prescription. These “homely remedy” products are kept in a care home to allow access to products which would commonly be available in any household.

This is to remind our homes of the [BLMK ICB Homely Remedies toolkit](#) which has been approved by BLMK ICB to be used by suitably trained staff, and as such represents the GPs and other healthcare professionals (HCPs) within the organisation.

It is not necessary for a Care Home to write to each resident’s GP or HCP for homely remedies to be approved or ‘signed off’, provided this toolkit is adopted by the care home and only the ICB list of products is stocked. BLMK ICB have had email confirmation from our local CQC inspector stating that they have no concerns with this approval process.

CQC and NICE fully support the use of Homely Remedies in a care home setting and endorse that a small range of products can be kept by the home.

It would be useful for the GP Practice supporting the home to know that the care home has adopted the BLMK ICB toolkit and that stocks of homely remedies are available for their patients. The manager of the care home must ensure they have procedures for managing homely remedies.

If you need any support setting up Homely Remedies or have any questions, please contact the relevant Care Home Pharmacy Technician for your area (Kasia, Lindsey, Lisa or Sharon).

MHRA alert - Epimax® Ointment & Epimax® Paraffin-Free Ointment

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) recently published a drug safety alert in regard to [Epimax Ointment and Epimax Paraffin-Free Ointment and reports of ocular surface toxicity and ocular chemical injury](#).

Epimax® Ointment and Epimax® Paraffin-Free Ointment are emollients, which are used to treat eczema, psoriasis and dry skin conditions. These ointments can harm the eyes if used on the face, so they should not be prescribed for use on this area. They should only be used on the body.

If the ointments come into contact with the eyes, residents may present with pain, swelling, redness or watering of eyes, sensitivity to light, blurred vision, burning or grittiness. Symptoms should resolve with discontinuation of the product around the eyes and can be treated with topical lubricants, topical antibiotics or topical steroids as required.

Care home protocols should be followed with regards to IPC and application of topical preparations (e.g. wearing gloves). Residents and carers who apply these ointments should wash their hands thoroughly after applying and avoid touching their eyes after using these products. If the product accidentally gets into the eyes, rinse well with water and seek medical advice from your surgery.

Residents and carers should report suspected adverse reactions associated with all emollients, including Epimax® Ointment and Epimax® Paraffin-Free Ointment, to the [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

For more information and details on the alert, please click on the link below:

Reference: <https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/epimax-ointment-and-epimax-paraffin-free-ointment-reports-of-ocular-surface-toxicity-and-ocular-chemical-injury>

Winter Planning

As we head into the Winter months the pressure on NHS services is increasing. Many health conditions, including respiratory system diseases, can be worsened by cold weather. This, together with higher incidences of falls and infections (including flu and norovirus), means the NHS often faces much greater pressure in winter, both in the community (including GPs and pharmacy services), and in hospitals. As ever, it is vital that we all continue to use NHS services appropriately.

There are things you can do within your care home to prepare for winter:

Homely Remedies

A homely remedy is a medicinal preparation that would be available in any household, used to treat minor ailments. A resident may develop a minor illness which in their own home would be easily treatable by accessing a local pharmacy or shop for an over-the-counter product (for example, paracetamol to treat a mild headache). By having homely remedies in the care home, for all of the residents to utilise, an immediate need can be met and the GP practice is only called if the symptoms persist. Care homes are encouraged to adopt the [Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes \(BLMK\) ICB Homely Remedies Toolkit](#), which contains the list of approved products and decision-making aids.

Self-Care

Self-care is a term used to include all the actions taken by people to recognise, treat and manage their own health. They may do this independently or in partnership with a care provider. This includes both pharmacological (e.g. using medication) and non-pharmacological (e.g. having good sleep hygiene) actions. People who receive social care should be supported to access OTC products to enable them to self-care. The [BLMK ICB Self-Care Toolkit](#) is a guide for care homes to support residents in self-caring for selective conditions by buying over the counter treatments.

Pharmacy First

A local community pharmacy is a good first point of call for medical advice if feeling unwell. In January 2024 BLMK introduced the new Pharmacy First Service, which allows community pharmacists to care for local people without the need for them to visit their general practice. Highly trained Pharmacists can provide blood pressure checks, contraception services, treatment for sinusitis, sore throat, earache, infected insect bite, impetigo, shingles, and uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women (under the age of 65) without the need for an appointment or prescription. Treatment would be supplied following an assessment if the person meets the criteria for that condition. More information can be found [here](#).

End-of-Life Medication

BLMK ICB commissions the End-of-Life Medicines Service from selected community pharmacies across BLMK. This service aims to ensure that patients receiving palliative care in the community have access to specialised drugs when required in an emergency. Information can be found [here](#).

Keeping Residents Well & Avoiding Hospital Admission

- Nutrition & hydration – Adequate nutrition is essential for good health and improved clinical outcomes. Malnutrition is known to increase risk of falls and impair the immune response. Good hydration can minimise the risk of infections, such as UTIs, and constipation.
- Keep moving – Where possible residents should be encouraged to stay active.
- Keep warm – Ensure residents wear appropriate clothing and keep hands and feet warm, especially if going outside.

- Good infection control – including regular hand washing and catching coughs and sneezes in tissues.
- Sick day rules - Dehydration can be a significant risk to people taking certain medicines. Medicines such as diuretics (e.g. Furosemide, Bendroflumethiazide), ACE Inhibitors (e.g. Ramipril, Lisinopril), ARBs (e.g. Losartan, Candesartan) and NSAIDs (e.g. Ibuprofen, Naproxen) should be stopped temporarily under HCP advice during illness which can result in dehydration (e.g. vomiting, diarrhoea and fever). Speak to your aligned practice/clinician on the weekly ward round for more information/advice.

Vaccinations

COVID-19

- The primary aim of the COVID-19 vaccination programme continues to be the prevention of severe disease arising from COVID-19.
- Those at higher risk of serious outcomes are advised to top up their immunity by taking up the offer of a vaccination this autumn. This cohort includes all those aged 65 or over and all those living in care homes for older adults.
- Frontline health and social care workers and staff working in care homes for older adults will continue to be offered COVID-19 vaccination in the autumn 2024 programme in England. Employers can signpost staff to the most convenient vaccination offer which may be through the National Booking Service (NBS), where staff can self-declare their eligibility.
- Further information on the autumn programme can be found in the [NHS Systems letter](#).

Influenza (flu)

- Flu vaccination remains a critically important public health intervention to reduce morbidity and mortality in those most at risk including older people.
- All adults over 65 years old and those living in a residential setting are eligible for the flu vaccine.
- Social care staff without an employer-led occupational health scheme can continue to access the flu vaccination through their GP, community pharmacy or [National Booking Service](#).
- More information can be found [here](#).

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

- RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms, but can lead to severe illness for young infants and older adults. The vaccine will help to protect lives and prevent severe illness in those most vulnerable to RSV.
- The RSV vaccine is being offered to adults who turn 75 on or after 1 September 2024 and those already aged 75 to 79. Individuals will remain eligible until the day before their 80th birthday, except for people who turn 80 in the first year who have until 31 August 2025 to get vaccinated.

More information on all winter vaccinations can be found [here](#).

Food First Service - now extended to Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes - The newly launched Food First Service for Milton Keynes is running a face to face information event on Monday 25th November from 2.00pm – 3.00pm. The session is designed to give care home leadership teams and catering teams from Milton Keynes care homes more information about what the project involves and a chance to meet the new Milton Keynes Food First team. To reserve a space or to contact the team for details about the new service, please email: food.first@mkuh.nhs.uk

The Food First Services for Bedford and Luton remain unchanged – details can be found below:

Bedford [Nutrition and Dietetics - Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust](#)

Email bhn-tr.foodfirst.northbeds@nhs.net

Luton [Information for care homes \(cambcommunityservices.nhs.uk\)](#)

Email food.first@nhs.net

Alcohol Management in Care Homes

For many older people, drinking alcohol brings pleasure and relaxation. But for some, it brings risks with the way alcohol affects the body as it ages, health conditions a person may have, or the medication that a person may take.

[CQC](#) have recently worked with the University of Bedfordshire to produce guidance on the management of alcohol in care homes to support care home staff deliver a high standard of care in relation to alcohol.

The [Alcohol Management in Care Homes - guide for staff](#) focuses on both the benefits of having alcohol available to care home residents who wish to take it, as well as how to mitigate potential risks. The risks which include medication interactions, confusion, intoxication, falls and injuries and dehydration can potentially be reduced with good practice as highlighted in the guidance.

The resource also provides guidance for care home staff who may be caring for an individual with a history of, or with suspected alcohol dependence. In addition, the guidance has 'poor practice' and 'good practice' case studies, further supporting how best practice around management of alcohol in care homes could be safely implemented.

Care home managers need to ensure they have appropriate processes in place to support the safe management of alcohol in their care settings and this guidance can assist with the development of these processes.

BLMK Enhanced Health in Care Homes - MDT Resource pack

BLMK ICB have produced an educational resource pack entitled '[BLMK Developing Effective Enhanced Health in Care Home MDT Meetings](#)'. This is an interactive document which has been designed to support Care home, Community, General Practice and Primary Care Network staff to get the most out of care home Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meetings with a view to ensuring best possible person centred care for each individual resident within the home. There is also a section on how pharmacy teams can help with medicines management in the care home.

If you have any questions regarding the information in the pack please contact: Donna Holding (BLMK Lead for Enhanced Health in Care Homes) - Donna.Holding@nhs.net

Contact us:

Bedfordshire team: Email: blmkicb.bedsmocarehometeam@nhs.net

Luton team: Email: blmkicb.lutoncarehometeam@nhs.net

Milton Keynes team: Email: blmkicb.mkcarehomespharmacy@nhs.net