

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

Newsletter Number 18, March 2025

Welcome to the March 2025 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 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

**For full details of Joint Formulary additions / amendments – see separate [February 2025 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](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

### Finerenone Prescribing Support Guidance

NEW  
GUIDANCE

New [prescribing guidance](#), and an associated [prescribing and monitoring checklist](#), has been produced to support the implementation of [NICE TA877](#) guidance for finerenone. Finerenone is an aldosterone antagonist indicated for treating chronic kidney disease in patients with type 2 diabetes and now has **GREEN** formulary status.

### BLMK Antimicrobial Primary Care Prescribing Guidelines

UPDATED

A full review and update of the [primary care antimicrobial prescribing guidelines](#) has been undertaken. This includes a significant update to the recurrent UTI section, reflecting recent changes to NICE Guideline [NG112](#) (Urinary tract infection (recurrent): antimicrobial prescribing) and addition of methenamine hippurate to the formularies as **GREEN**. Updates have also been made to other sections, including: acute otitis externa, scarlet fever, chlamydia, epididymitis and scabies.

### Bempedoic acid prescribing support information

NEW  
GUIDANCE

New [prescribing support guidance](#) has been developed to support primary care clinicians when considering prescribing bempedoic acid for lipid management. Bempedoic acid is recommended for use in line with [NICE TA694](#) and the BLMK Lipid Management Pathway.

### Inclisiran prescribing support information

NEW  
GUIDANCE

Prescribing guidance has been developed to support primary care prescribers when treating patients with [primary hypercholesterolaemia or mixed dyslipidaemia with inclisiran](#). Inclisiran is recommended in line with [NICE TA733](#) and the BLMK Lipid Management Pathway for patients with a history of cardiovascular events.

### East of England hypertension protocols

UPDATED

Protocols for the management of hypertension in people aged <80 years, and another for people aged ≥ 80 years, have been developed and agreed by clinical leads, commissioners and medicines optimisation teams from ICBs across the East of England (EoE). These are based on the existing BLMK hypertension management protocols and there are only minor changes from the current agreed BLMK pathways, with no changes in the BP treatment thresholds and targets, class of medications used at each step of the pathway, medication choice in class or recommended dosages. The EoE protocols were approved for use in BLMK, and have replaced the previously approved BLMK pathways. [Click here](#) to access the EoE hypertension protocols.

### Additional guidelines updated / uploaded to the Medicines website

WEBSITE  
UPDATES

- The [BLMK High Flow Oxygen Policy](#) (myAIRVO2) is now available on the Medicines website. The myAIRVO2 system delivers warmed and humidified oxygen, including at high-flow rates, and can be used in the home or other domiciliary care environment only.
- Guidance on the use of nebulised Colistimethate sodium, nebulised Gentamicin and nebulised Tobramycin as Antibiotic Prophylaxis to prevent exacerbations of Non-Cystic Fibrosis Bronchiectasis in adult patients has been updated and extended for use across the BLMK ICS. [Click here](#) to view the guidance.

## SECONDARY CARE PRESCRIBING / COMMISSIONING ISSUES

### Ophthalmology Intravitreal Injections algorithm

UPDATED

The [BLMK Intravitreal Injections algorithm](#) has been updated to include recently published [NICE TA1022](#) recommendations on bevacizumab gamma for the treatment of wet age-related macular degeneration (wAMD). Bevacizumab gamma is an additional treatment option for adults with visual impairment caused by wAMD.

### Ulcerative colitis treatment pathway

UPDATED

The [BLMK treatment pathway](#) for management of moderate to severe Ulcerative Colitis after failure of conventional therapy has been updated to clarify information relating to mirikizumab ([NICE TA925](#)).

## SHARED CARE GUIDELINES

The following shared care guideline has been finalised and uploaded to the Medicines Optimisation website:

- The [ADHD children and young people shared care guideline](#) has been updated and extended to apply across the whole of BLMK. It now includes information on dexamfetamine, driving (as provided by the DVLA), pregnancy and breast feeding.

UPDATED  
SHARED CARE  
GUIDELINE

## WOUND CARE FORMULARY UPDATES

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

- UrgoStart Plus Pad** (6x6cm and 10x10cm) has been added to the Bedfordshire & Luton Community Wound Management Formulary to align with the Milton Keynes Community Wound Management Formulary. UrgoStart Plus Pad is an option for the management of complex leg ulcer wounds and is for TVN specialist use only, or on their advice.

FORMULARY  
ADDITIONS/  
CHANGES/  
UPDATES

**Reminder:** 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.

## NICE TECHNOLOGY APPRAISAL GUIDANCE and GUIDELINES ISSUED / UPDATED

**The following NICE Technology Appraisal Guidance (ICB Commissioned) have been published during the period from 21 November 2024 until 12 February 2025 inclusive:**

Bevacizumab gamma for treating wet age-related macular degeneration Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1022 Published: 04 December 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1022> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1026 Published: 23 December 2024 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1026> (added to formularies with initial **RED** traffic light status).

Andexanet alfa for reversing anticoagulation from apixaban or rivaroxaban Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA697 Published: 12 May 2021 Last updated: 15 January 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta697> (on formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Andexanet alfa for reversing anticoagulation in people with intracranial haemorrhage (terminated appraisal)  
Technology appraisal Reference number: TA1029. Published: 15 January 2025  
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1029>

[Click here](#) to access all technology appraisal guidelines - ICB and NHSE Commissioned (21 November 2024 until 12 February 2025 inclusive)

**NICE Guidelines:**

NICE have published several NICE Guidelines since November 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 ([October](#), [November](#) and [December](#) 2024, and [January 2025](#)). In particular:

**Welireg® (belzutifan) Patient alert cards (November 2024)**

Risk minimisation materials are available to minimise the risk of hypoxia related adverse reactions.

**Action(s) taken:** Linked to formulary for information. For noting and action by acute providers.

**GLP-1 and dual GIP/GLP-1 receptor agonists: potential risk of pulmonary aspiration during general anaesthesia or deep sedation (January 2025)**

Healthcare professionals should be aware of the potential risk in patients who undergo surgery or procedures with general anaesthesia or deep sedation.

**Action(s) taken:** the alert will be discussed at the March MSG. For noting and action by acute providers.

**Shortage of Pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT) - Additional actions ([National Patient Safety Alert, December 2024](#))**

This alert contains actions which are in addition to those outlined in the [National Patient Safety Alert](#) issued in May 2024. The updated alert required ICBs to take action to formulate a local management plan and communicate that with GP practices, community pharmacies and acute providers.

**Action(s) taken:** a management plan for BLMK has been developed and was approved at the January 2025 MSG meeting. This has been shared with stakeholders. GP practices are asked to prescribe a maximum of one month's supply of PERT, as per the serious shortage protocols, and arrangements are in place to support community pharmacies with accessing stock of PERT. The process is supported by the Medicines Optimisation team. Use of the unlicensed, imported alternative to Creon (Pangrol) is available if all routes of supply for licensed PERT products have been exhausted.

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

- **Females of childbearing age on warfarin / contraindication in pregnancy** – there was a recent significant event within BLMK when a female patient on warfarin became pregnant. This triggered a review of female patients of childbearing age on warfarin in BLMK, and whether they are on effective contraception. Key themes discussed at MSG included: patient education and pre-pregnancy planning, referral for long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), and what steps can be taken to prevent a similar incident happening in the future.

## ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE UPDATE

The BLMK antimicrobial resistance group discussed the following issues at the meeting held in December 2024:

- There has been a national upward trend in *Clostridioides difficile* infection. Root cause analyses have been undertaken of hospital acquired cases within BLMK, but no particular patterns or trends have been noted amongst affected patients and there have been no outbreaks. Patients often have a number of co-morbidities but may not be particularly unwell with the *C. diff* infection.
- BLMK is the highest prescribing area in England for antimicrobials in children. Work to be undertaken to address this includes: public health messaging, clinician education sessions, and engagement with other areas such as out of hours services and walk-in centres.

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

## ADDITIONAL PAPERS/ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

### Tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity

NICE published [TA1026](#): Tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024. At the request of NHS England, a funding variation was granted by NICE which extends the implementation period up to 12 years to enable patients with the greatest clinical need to be prioritised. Prioritisation is by BMI and weight-related medical conditions, including hypertension, dyslipidaemia, obstructive sleep apnoea, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and prediabetes.

NHS England has only recently published the eligible cohorts for prioritisation in the first 3 years. Tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity will remain **RED** on the formularies until a pathway is in place. A short life working group has been established to support local implementation once the financial allocation, initial eligibility criteria and wrap around care package have been shared by NHS England.

An ICS partnership position statement has been published to assist patients and local clinicians: <https://blmkhealthandcarepartnership.org/an-update-on-weight-loss-medication-tirzepatide/>.

## BLMK APC 2025 FUTURE MEETING DATES

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 and other prescribers, 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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