

CareHomesNews

BLMK ICB Care Home Medicines Optimisation team

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Updates - 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](#)

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

Tier 2 – Focuses on selected topics and local guidance/policies - new dates for 2025/26

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	Tuesday 20 th May 2025, 14:30 –15:30 - Register
When Required (PRN) Medication	Wednesday 16 th July 2025, 14:30 – 15:30 - Register
Covert Administration of Medication	Tuesday 16 th September 2025, 14:30 – 15:30 - Register
Medicines Reconciliation & Transfers of Care	Wednesday 12 th November 2025, 14:30 – 15:30 - Register
Controlled Drugs & Regulations in Care Homes	Tuesday 20 th January 2026, 14:30 – 15:30 - Register
Medication Safety, Governance & Safeguarding	Wednesday 18 th March 2026, 14:30 – 15:30 - Register

A big thank you to those that joined our last Tier 2 session on 'Medication Safety, Governance & Safeguarding'. It was a great success with 411 devices joining the session.

We hope you can join us for the forthcoming topic, 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 - update and new date!

In February, our team held another successful Tier 3 Medication Champion Training event for care home staff in Milton Keynes. We had 21 attendees on the day and as a result in total we have trained 98 Medication Champions across BLMK.



If you are interested in becoming a Medication Champion for your care home we have a further training date scheduled as per below:

Forthcoming date for Medication Champion day (9am - 3pm):

Wednesday 25th June 2025 - Bentley Grange Nursing Home (Bedford)

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 the above event 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 Homely Remedies Toolkit and Medicines Policy guide

We have recently reviewed and updated both the '[Homely Remedies Toolkit](#)' and our '[How to produce a medicines policy for care homes](#)' guide. See main updates and revisions below:

Homely Remedies Toolkit - updates:

- ⇒ Reference links and resources updated
- ⇒ Page 7 – information added regarding CQCs support of the approval process.
- ⇒ Page 8 – information added regarding consideration for safeguarding and those that lack mental capacity to make decision.
- ⇒ Page 10 – new paragraph added regarding obtaining verbal consent, where possible, and considering religious beliefs, dietary preferences, intolerances etc
- ⇒ Chart 2 for pain – removed reference to Co-proxamol painkiller as no longer available
- ⇒ Chart 3 for constipation – added Clozapine as an example of a medication that can cause constipation
- ⇒ Chart 4 for diarrhoea – to the 'Medicines and Dehydration' box, added SGLT2 inhibitors which are used to manage type 2 diabetes (e.g., canagliflozin, dapagliflozin, empagliflozin, ertugliflozin).
- ⇒ Chart 5 for dry cough – removed reference to follow care home Covid-19 policy

'How to produce a medicines policy for care homes' guide - updates:

Updated links for:

- ⇒ [BLMK ICB Medication Room Refrigerator Temperature Management](#)
- ⇒ [BLMK ICB Good Practice Guidance for Care Homes – Expiry Dates for Medication](#)
- ⇒ [BLMK ICB Covert administration guidance for care homes](#)
- ⇒ [Adult Social Care training offer – Tier 2 Flyer](#)

Added as new:

- ⇒ New link to [BLMK ICB Overt administration of medication – Quick Reference Guide for care homes](#)
- ⇒ New Link for [Controlled Drug Accountable Officer \(CDAO\) regional contacts](#)
- ⇒ New Link for [Local Police CD Liaison](#)

All of our guidance documents can be found on our care home website page [here](#)

Emollients and Fire safety

Emollients are commonly used for skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis.

Emollients can transfer from the skin onto clothing, bedding, dressings, and other fabric. Once there, they can dry onto the fabric and build up over time.

Although emollients are not flammable in themselves or when on the skin, when dried on to fabric they act as an accelerant, increasing the speed of ignition and intensity of a fire. This accelerant effect significantly reduces the time available to act to put out a clothing or bedding fire before serious and fatal burns are sustained.

This applies to all emollients (lotions, creams, ointments, gels, sprays, soap substitutes), whether they contain paraffin or not.

Advice to reduce the risk of a fire associated with emollient use:

- Avoid smoking
- Let emollients soak into skin before putting clothes back on
- Wash clothes, towels and bedding often - preferably at high temperatures but research has shown that high temperatures does not completely remove emollients
- Keep away from a high heat source or naked flames
- Other safety measures include using safety lighters or e-cigarettes

The fire risk associated with emollients needs to be shared not only with the resident using them but with their families, friends and carers.

More information and resources can be found at:

- <https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/emollients-and-risk-of-severe-and-fatal-burns-new-resources-available>
- [Issue 3: Fire risk from use of emollient creams - Care Quality Commission](#)

Valproate update: review by two specialists for initiation

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) recently published a drug safety alert in regard to [Valproate: review by two specialists is required for initiating valproate but not for male patients already taking valproate.](#)

Valproate is licenced for the treatment of epilepsy and bipolar disorder. It is known to have potential risks of major congenital malformations or neurodevelopmental disorders in children when mothers take valproate during pregnancy. More recently, the risk of a range of neurodevelopmental disorders in children born to fathers taking valproate compared to other antiseizures medicines has been documented.

The Commission on Human Medicines has advised that a review by two specialists is required for initiating valproate in patients under 55 years of age but not for men who are already taking valproate.

If you have any residents (male or female) taking Valproate who are under 55 years old please escalate to the resident's GP so they can ensure prescribing is appropriate and that all appropriate counselling and risk assessment has taken place.

Reference: <https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/valproate-belvo-convulex-depakote-dyzantil-epilim-epilim-chrono-or-chronosphere-episenta-epival-and-syonellv-review-by-two-specialists-is-required-for-initiating-valproate-but-not-for-male-patients-already-taking-valproate>

Covid-19 Vaccinations - Spring Booster 2025

The COVID-19 virus continues to circulate and can be highly dangerous, particularly for vulnerable groups. Hospitals saw an average of over 1,000 beds each day over winter occupied by patients with COVID. The vaccine provides vital protection against different strains of the COVID virus and helps reduce the risk of catching and spreading it, as well as the risk of serious illness or needing to go to hospital if caught.

Eligibility for a spring vaccination, as advised by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), include the following cohorts:

- adults aged 75 years and over, including those who will turn 75 years old by 17 June 2025.
- residents in a care home for older adults
- individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed

Carers and staff in care homes are not eligible for the Spring booster - this is because the vaccination programme this spring is targeted towards providing protection to those most vulnerable to severe disease.

Local teams will be in touch to organise vaccination of care home residents.

For more information please click on the reference link below:

[A guide to the spring 2025 COVID-19 vaccination campaign - GOV.UK](#)

Importance of timely administration of Parkinson's Disease medication

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder that affects movement control, leading to symptoms such as tremors, rigidity, bradykinesia (slowness of movement), and postural instability to name just a few. As care home staff who administer medication, making sure your Parkinson's residents receive their medication on time is vital to their wellbeing. One crucial aspect of managing Parkinson's is the precise timing and administration of medication, which plays a central role in managing symptoms and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Parkinson's UK launched the ['Get It On' Time](#) campaign because it is vital that people with Parkinson's get their medication on time, every time. If people with Parkinson's don't get their medication on time, their ability to manage their symptoms may be lost. They may suddenly not be able to move, get out of bed or walk down a corridor.

The timing is vital because:

- **Levodopa has a short half-life:** Levodopa, the most common medication for Parkinson's, has a relatively short duration of action. If it's not administered at the right intervals, the symptoms can worsen, leading to "off" periods where the person experiences increased tremors or difficulty moving. People who are prescribed levodopa should receive their medicine within 30 minutes of their individually prescribed administration time.
- **Medication needs to be spaced out:** Irregular timing can cause fluctuations in symptom control, leading to unpredictable changes in motor function.
- **Managing side effects:** Timely dosing not only helps with controlling symptoms but can also minimise side effects. For example, taking medication too late in the evening can affect sleep patterns, while taking it too early might cause discomfort during activities.
- **Preventing complications:** Incorrect timing can also lead to a cycle of "on" and "off" periods, where the resident might experience sudden, temporary improvements in mobility followed by worsening symptoms. This can be very distressing for them and impact their quality of life.

What can you do to ensure timely administration?

- ⇒ Ensure your resident has a person-centred care plan to show how they receive their medicines safely and in a way that meets their needs, and make sure all staff administering medication are aware of the plan.
- ⇒ It is good practice to have the specific times of administration added to MAR charts to support with timely administration, speak to your aligned GP surgery about this.
- ⇒ You can use your electronic MAR system to set alerts and reminders to make sure the correct doses are given at the right times.
- ⇒ Some staff have set up alarms on their watches or phones/handheld care devices.
- ⇒ Displaying posters in your medication room are also a great way to ensure everyone remembers how important managing timings are.
- ⇒ Support residents to self-administer their medication, where appropriate
- ⇒ Keep a close watch on symptom changes and communicate any concerns to your aligned GP surgery or Parkinson's Disease Specialist nurse.
- ⇒ You, your staff and residents can visit the [Parkinson's UK](#) website for resources, training and guidance.

It is essential that all care home staff, including support staff, are educated on the importance of timely medication administration. Providing regular training sessions or refreshers can ensure everyone understands how best to support residents with Parkinson's. By understanding the critical role that timing plays, care home staff can significantly improve the daily life of residents living with Parkinson's.

Good medicines management can make a significant impact to your resident's quality of life. Please get in touch if you need any general advice or support for your residents.

References:

[Time sensitive medicines - Care Quality Commission](#)

[Overview | Parkinson's disease in adults | Guidance | NICE](#)

[Parkinson's drugs | Parkinson's UK](#)

Sourcing acute or urgent prescription medication

We would like to remind homes that acute prescriptions or urgent prescriptions (e.g., antibiotics, acute pain relief), should be started as soon as possible as advised by the prescriber. Delayed treatment may lead to the deterioration of an illness or unnecessary pain or discomfort and may lead to a safeguarding alert.

If a prescription is issued electronically, care home staff should inform the agreed nominated pharmacy of the urgent nature of the acute prescription and confirm that the medication will be delivered in a timely manner. Where a prescription has been written by hand, or issued as a printed prescription instead of electronically, care home staff may have to take the prescription to a local pharmacy for it to be dispensed in an acceptable timeframe.

In some cases (e.g., new resident joining and registering to aligned surgery) you may have to request a change in the nominated pharmacy to your local pharmacy. Please ensure all staff are informed of which nominated pharmacy the medication supply will be coming from, so if there are any delays the prescription should be chased with the nominated pharmacy.

BLMK ICB Care Home Staff Training Brochure 2025-26

Please find below the link to the updated BLMK ICB Enhanced Health in Care Homes (EHICH) training brochure for care home staff.

[BLMK Enhanced Health In Care Homes \(EHICH\) Care Staff Training Brochure - BLMK ICB](#)

Please share with your staff and colleagues

Contact us:

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

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

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