

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

Newsletter Number 21, September 2025

Welcome to the September 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 24 September 2025.

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

Glucocorticoid-induced Osteoporosis guidelines (applicable for use in Post-menopausal Women & Men (age ≥ 50 years) in the Primary Care Setting)

NEW
GUIDANCE

The guidance on the management of [glucocorticoid-induced osteoporosis](#) has been separated out from the main osteoporosis guidelines into a standalone document. The document provides recommendations on treatments and management of patients on steroids, including when to review and consider stopping treatment, and compliments the main [osteoporosis guideline](#)

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Primary Care Guidelines

UPDATED

A comprehensive review and update has been undertaken of the existing [BLMK primary care COPD guidelines](#). Updates include clear guidance on referral pathways, integration of supporting resources, updated inhaler formulary to include carbon footprint, and improved clinical content. Alongside the main guideline, a handy one page quick guide has been developed.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) treatment Pathway

UPDATED

The [BLMK chronic kidney disease \(CKD\) treatment pathway](#) has been updated and reformatted, and includes revised treatment thresholds, use of generic dapagliflozin as the preferred SGLT2 inhibitor, and inclusion of additional notes, references, and referral criteria information for the renal team.

SGLT2 inhibitors in chronic kidney disease (CKD) in adults

GUIDANCE
FOR GP
PRACTICES

The primary care prescribing support document for [SGLT2 inhibitors in chronic kidney disease \(CKD\)](#) has been updated to align with the NICE Technology Appraisal guidance on dapagliflozin for treating CKD ([TA1075](#)). Additionally, updates have been made to the monitoring section, and to highlight that generic dapagliflozin is the first choice SGLT2 inhibitor in BLMK.

Adult asthma guidelines

UPDATED

Following the publication of the NICE / BTS / SIGN asthma guidelines in 2024, and changes to the 2025/26 GP contract, the [BLMK Asthma Guidelines for Adults](#) have been revised and updated. Updates include changes to diagnostics, pharmacological management (positioning of montelukast and tiotropium in the SABA-free regimen), and a clear route from the traditional pathway to the SABA-free pathway for patients who have uncontrolled asthma. The traditional pathway remains in the guidance for use in existing patients with controlled asthma.

Tirzepatide Prescribing Guidance for Patients with Type 2 Diabetes

GUIDANCE
FOR GP
PRACTICES

Minor updates have been made to the prescribing guidance for [tirzepatide for treating patients with type 2 diabetes](#). Updates include: review information, guidance on co-prescribing with DPP-4s (not recommended), oral contraception and hormone replacement therapy, cautions, and blood glucose monitoring for group 2 drivers.

Additional guidelines updated / uploaded to the website

WEBSITE
UPDATES

- [BLMK ICB Position Statement on Prescribing Shower and Swim Protection Pouches](#) – prescribing not recommended.
- The [BLMK preferred blood and ketone meters guidance](#) has been updated to reflect new guidance issued by NHS England.

See the [formulary newsletter](#) for further details of the above guidance.

SECONDARY CARE PRESCRIBING / COMMISSIONING ISSUES

Severe psoriasis treatment pathway

The [BLMK severe psoriasis treatment pathway](#) has been updated to include the option to dose escalate adalimumab prior to moving to an alternative treatment option within the pathway.

UPDATED

Crohn's Disease treatment pathway

The [BLMK treatment pathway for Crohn's Disease](#) has been updated to incorporate newly published NICE Technology Appraisal recommendations for mirikizumab ([TA1080](#)) and guselkumab ([TA1095](#)). The treatment pathway is for the management of patients with moderately to severely active Crohn's Disease after the failure of conventional therapy.

UPDATED

Ulcerative Colitis treatment pathway

The [BLMK Ulcerative Colitis treatment pathway](#) has been updated to incorporate the newly published NICE Technology Appraisal for guselkumab ([TA1094](#)). The treatment pathway is for the management of patients with moderate to severe Ulcerative Colitis after failure of conventional therapy.

UPDATED

Atopic Dermatitis treatment pathway

The [BLMK Atopic Dermatitis treatment pathway](#) has been updated to incorporate a new NICE Technology Appraisal recommendation for nemolizumab ([TA1077](#)). Nemolizumab is an additional treatment option within the existing treatment pathway for patients with moderate to severe atopic dermatitis after inadequate response to topical treatments and conventional systemic therapies.

UPDATED

WOUND CARE FORMULARY UPDATES

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

- **Suprasorb P foam dressing** range is to be extended to incorporate newly available sizes and versions which will accommodate a larger range of wounds.
- The following like-for-like substitutions will be made shortly to cover dressings that are no longer being produced:
 - **Debrisoft Duo** to replace DebrisClean pad.
 - **Advancis Honey barrier cream** to replace Medihoney barrier cream.
- A new section for Luton area guidelines has been added to Eolas ([Luton TVN Guidance and Further Information](#)).

FORMULARY
ADDITIONS/
CHANGES/
UPDATES

Reminder: the wound management formularies have 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 19 June until 10 September 2025 inclusive:

Sparsentan for treating primary IgA nephropathy Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1074 Published: 25 June 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1074> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Nemolizumab for treating moderate to severe atopic dermatitis in people 12 years and over Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1077 Published: 02 July 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1077> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Dapagliflozin for treating chronic kidney disease Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1075 Published: 02 July 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1075> (on formularies with **GREEN** traffic light status).

Mirikizumab for treating moderately to severely active Crohn's disease Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1080 Published: 10 July 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1080> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Cenobamate for treating focal onset seizures in epilepsy Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA753 Published: 15 December 2021 Last updated: 24 July 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta753> (on formularies with **Amber SplS** formulary status).

Betula verrucosa for treating moderate to severe allergic rhinitis or conjunctivitis caused by tree pollen Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1087 Published: 06 August 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1087> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Ruxolitinib cream for treating non-segmental vitiligo in people 12 years and over Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1088 Published: 13 August 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1088> (note recommended; added to formularies as non-formulary / **DNP** traffic light status).

Guselkumab for treating moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1094 Published: 28 August 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1094> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Guselkumab for previously treated moderately to severely active Crohn's disease Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1095 Published: 28 August 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1095> (added to formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

Tirzepatide for treating type 2 diabetes Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA924 Published: 25 October 2023 Last updated: 01 September 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta924> (on formularies with **GREEN** traffic light status).

Tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity Technology appraisal guidance Reference number: TA1026 Published: 23 December 2024 Last updated: 01 September 2025 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1026> (on formularies with **RED** traffic light status).

[Click here](#) to access **all** technology appraisal guidelines - ICB and NHSE Commissioned (19 June until 10 September 2025 inclusive)

NICE Guidelines:

NICE have published several NICE Guidelines since June 2025 – [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 ([July 2025](#)) and CAS alerts (June to September 2025). In particular:

Abrysvo ▼ (Pfizer RSV vaccine) and Arexvy ▼ (GSK RSV vaccine): be alert to a small risk of Guillain-Barré syndrome following vaccination in older adults (DSU, July 2025)

Action(s) taken: included in BHFT's newsletter; for discussion at October MSG meeting.

Potential contamination of non-sterile alcohol-free skin cleansing wipes with Burkholderia spp: measures to reduce patient risk ([CAS alert](#), June 2025)

Action(s) taken: For action by trust Infection Prevention Control teams; discussed by the Wound Formulary Management Steering Group (non-sterile wipes not used by TVNs).

Bumetanide 1mg tablets are out of stock until mid-August 2025 ([CAS alert](#), July 2025)

Action(s) taken: Information included on the Formularies and messaging activated on Optimise Rx to direct prescribers to consider furosemide for new patients to conserve stock. Tracked at BHFT Purchasing Medicines for Safety (PMFS) shortages meeting. NB: Supply issue no longer appearing on SPS Medicines Supply Tool.

Shortage of Antimicrobial Agents Used in Tuberculosis (TB) Treatment ([CAS alert](#), July 2025)

Action(s) taken: Engagement with antimicrobial consultants and TB leads at trusts. Ringfencing for TB indications ongoing. Within Primary Care patients have been identified and repatriated, with de-prescribing where the indication is not for TB. Affected practices have been contacted. Optimise Rx messages are in place to flag to prescribers the new red traffic light status. BHFT and MKUH have completed their trust's action plan. Memo has been circulated. Patients have been identified and supply limited to one month. Alternatives are being investigated, however sourcing is challenging.

Harm from delayed administration of rasburicase for tumour lysis syndrome ([CAS alert](#), Sept 2025)

Action(s) taken: Red (hospital only) drug on the formularies. Linking in with cancer networks. Actions to be completed by 09 March 2026. Added to October MSG agenda for discussion.

Medicines Safety Group (MSG) Update:

- **Valproate system response update:**
 - Ardens templates in place on SystmOne for referral to specialist and/or sexual health for completion of the ARAF / for support with contraception respectively. Work is ongoing to increase the number of women of childbearing age who have a valid ARAF (Annual Risk Acknowledgement Form) or exemption recorded on SystmOne within the last 12 months.
 - The valproate subgroup has been disbanded and valproate taken into MSG as a standing agenda item with a focus on system update every other meeting (last update was August).
 - ELFT are an exemplar area and have electronic forms and policies all in place. They are also developing a BI dashboard to monitor valproate and form completion. They have widely shared their processes with the system (the main platform being a stakeholder meeting, held in March).
 - Optimise Rx messaging is live to highlight the need for form completion.
- **Topiramate system response update:**
 - The process is less well established but aims to be like valproate.
 - Ardens searches have been built and Optimise Rx messaging is in place to flag the need for form completion.
 - Eclipse alerts are being upgraded from blue to amber alerts to reflect the risk, and actioning amber alerts have been incentivised in this year's prescribing incentive scheme.
- Do once and share learning topics covered in August MSG:
 - **GLP-1 medicines for weight loss and diabetes.** The MHRA published "[what you need to know](#)" guidance in August 2025 to support clinicians. The desirability of these medications for weight loss has led to increased GP workload from requests, instances of patients falsifying data

to access, and the risk of obtaining falsified injections. In BLMK, these medicines remain Red on the formularies – for prescribing in specialist weight management services only.

- **Oestrogen prescribed without progesterone for HRT in women with an intact uterus.** A small number of incidents were discussed at MSG and learning shared around the risks of prescribing unopposed oestrogen in women with an intact uterus. The patients were identified through audit, which led to further discussion around development of a suite of audits for high-risk areas of prescribing. This will be added to the MSG workplan and is being considered as a prescribing incentive scheme target.
- **Phenytoin – statin interaction.** This interaction was flagged via the ICB regional forum. An initial look at data suggests several patients in Primary Care are co-prescribed phenytoin with simvastatin or atorvastatin, which reduces the effectiveness of lipid lowering, and highlights the need to raise awareness of the risk. This interaction will be discussed at the BLMK Place Prescribing meetings.
- **Time critical medicines.** Time critical medicines have been in focus nationally for some time – the group shared learning and resources from a variety of platforms and discussed some future QI projects for BLMK in this area. Critical medicines lists have been updated by trusts and work is ongoing to embed use of Self-Administration of Insulin boxes (SAMI) into practice.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE UPDATE

The recent, September 2025, antimicrobial resistance / infection prevention and control (AMR/IPC) meeting focussed on the following workstreams:

- Antibiotic prescribing in children (primary care)
- IV to oral switch (secondary care)

Work is ongoing to reduce antibiotic prescribing in children, with educational sessions carried out for primary care clinicians across the ICS. Further sessions are planned with out of hours providers. In addition, AMR teams are linking in with Public Health, and looking in further detail at practices with higher prescribing rates.

Reminder: The BLMK antibiotics guidelines website may be accessed [here](#).

BLMK APC 2025/26 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Wednesday 3rd December 2025
Wednesday 4th March 2026
Wednesday 6th May 2026
Wednesday 1st July 2026
Wednesday 23rd September 2026
Wednesday 2nd December 2026

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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