

## MEDICINES MANAGEMENT

### Monthly Drug Tariff Watch

The Drug Tariff Watch (Attachment 1) is produced and updated monthly to provide information on price concessions, changes in drug tariff prices and current serious shortages.

**Serious Shortages Protocol (SSP):** pharmacy contractors can use their professional skill and judgement to substitute the patient's prescribed order for the active SSP including substitution of [phenoxymethylpenicillin products](#) in order of decreasing preference listed on the active SSPs.

**Medicines supply issue:** consider recommendation provided for alternative

**Price concession:** please contact your prescribing advisor for advice if items that cannot be dispensed due to significant cost difference.

### Group A Streptococcus (Strep A)

SEL interim prescribing guidance for the treatment of Group A Streptococcus (GAS) infection in children aged 0 – 17 is now available via this [link](#), which was developed in collaboration by SEL Acute Trusts and based on [national guidance](#). It provides further information in relation to choice and duration of treatment options. [NICE Summary Antimicrobial Prescribing Guidance](#) was also updated to reflect the national guidance.

Children 5 years and above may be able to swallow tablets/capsules. Where children are unable to swallow oral solid dose forms, resources such as SPS [guidance](#) and [patient information leaflet](#) on how to give doses by dispersing or crushing tablets or opening capsules are available. Use in this way is outside the product license ('off-label').

### Treatment Access Policy (TAP)

This [policy](#) deals with treatments and procedures for which restricted access criteria have been agreed and applied equally to all boroughs within SEL.

### Improving the Safe and Effective Use of Direct Oral Anticoagulants (DOACs): National Webinar

The webinars are taking place on 24<sup>th</sup> January and 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 on 'Improving the Safe and Effective Use of DOACs'. See Attachment 2 for more information. Registration details can be [found here](#).

### Congratulations to Rena Amin

Rena Amin has successfully been appointed to CCPL in MH and LDA (0.2 WTE) and SEL LDA Pharmacy Lead (0.2WTE) and thus has stepped down from her role as Associate Director of Medicines Optimisation (Greenwich). Please contact Jin On or [greenwich.pharmacy@selondonics.nhs.uk](mailto:greenwich.pharmacy@selondonics.nhs.uk) for any medicines or prescribing related queries.

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### Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) update on immunisation schedule for children

JCVI has been notified of the discontinuation of **Menitorix® (Hib/MenC)**. This necessitates a change to the routine infant schedule as this vaccine is currently given at 12 months. **JCVI now advises:**

- an additional dose of Hib-containing multivalent vaccine should be offered at 12 or 18 months of ages – A new immunisation visit would be required if given at 18 months.
- the second dose of Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine should be brought forwards from 3 years 4 months to 18 months of age to improve coverage
- based on the demonstrated decline of Invasive Meningococcal A, C, W and Y disease in the UK and subsequent low number of cases to prevent, including a dose of MenC-containing vaccine (such as MenACWY) in the infant schedule is not recommended – efforts to sustain and improve coverage of MenACWY in adolescents are important to maintain herd immunity.

### Stemetil (Prochlorperazine mesylate) 5mg/5ml Syrup: permanent discontinuation

Stemetil 5mg/5ml syrup has been permanently discontinued in UK since October 2022. This is due to laboratory results demonstrating excess levels of N-nitrosomethylphenylamine, which is classed as a probable human carcinogen.

#### Action for practices:

- Do not initiate in new patients, arrange to review existing patients to taper off and switch to an alternative available treatment. Stemetil tablet and injectable remain available.

### Drug Safety Update: Valproate

- Following advice from the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM), new safety measures for valproate-containing medicines are to be put in place in the coming months. This is in view of data showing ongoing exposure to valproate in pregnancy. [Please click here to read the MHRA article.](#)
- GPhC have sent out an important reminder to pharmacy professionals about dispensing valproate, which can be [found here](#).
- The 2022/23 clinical audit set by NHS England as part of the community pharmacy contractual requirement is preventing harm caused by valproate prescribing in patients of childbearing age who are biologically able to be pregnant. The details of the audit can be [found here](#).

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### Opioid Stewardship

The Health Innovation Network (HIN), South London, has developed an Opioid Stewardship QI Collaborative across South London to support safer treatment of chronic non-cancer pain. The programme aims to support practices and PCNS to meet contract requirements (e.g. [QOF framework QI Incentive](#) and [Investment and Impact Fund 22/23](#)) and provide **updated monthly data packs and positive narratives**. The data and resource pack contain:

- ePACT2 data (adopting the Campaign to Reduce Opioid Prescribing (CROP) method)

**Note:** The data is not weighted or benchmarked and does not distinguish between cancer and non-cancer pain.

#### SEL Data:

- 9.18 per 1000 patients are prescribed opioids (ICB average 20.43)
- 55.76 per 1000 patients with a total oral morphine equivalent volume of 120mg or more in most recent 28-day period (National average 63.25)

**Action:** Practices are encouraged to use the data pack to prioritise review of opioid medicines by reducing high dose prescribing (>120mg oral Morphine equivalent). Please see attachment 3-4 for Opioid Stewardship QI Resource Pack and Greenwich practices opioid data.

### Freestyle Libre Sensors

The original Freestyle Libre sensors are being discontinued at the end of December 2022. Therefore, all existing patients using the original Freestyle Libre sensors will need to be switched over to the Freestyle Libre 2 sensors.

#### Difference between Freestyle Libre and Freestyle Libre 2:

- Freestyle Libre 2 system has an additional alarm function which is optional to use
- There are three alarms if they wish to use them: for low glucose readings; for high glucose readings and for a loss of signal.
- They **cannot** use Freestyle Libre 2 sensors with the original Freestyle Libre reader

#### Action:

- Please change existing prescription of Freestyle Libre to the **NEW** Freestyle Libre 2 sensors, but to avoid any wastage please advise patients to use up any of the original Freestyle Libre sensors
- If patients use the Freestyle Libre LibreLink smartphone app to scan the sensor, they may need to update the app.
- If patients use a Freestyle Libre reader to scan the sensor, then they will need to request a new reader directly with Abbots via calling Customer Service Team 0800 170 1177 or [website](#), OR switch over using the LibreLink app.

### Shortage of Semaglutide (Ozempic) 1mg/0.74ml and 0.5mg/0.37ml solution for injection pre-filled device

Shortages of Ozempic® remain as an issue. **Action:** Do not initiate new patients until full supplies become available AND prescribe an alternative GLP-1 RAs for patients who need to be continued on this therapy and have insufficient supplies.

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### Revised SPC

#### Losartan (Cozaar and Cozaar-Comp) Film-Coated Tablets - all strengths

• Grapefruit juice can inhibit CYP450 enzymes, lowering the active form of losartan, which may reduce therapeutic effect. **Action:** Concomitant consumption of grapefruit juice should be avoided.

#### Crestor (rosuvastatin) all strength film-coated tablets

• Ticagrelor may reduce renal excretion of rosuvastatin, increasing the risk of rosuvastatin accumulation.

**Action:** Monitor U&E levels and look out for impaired renal function, increased CPK level and rhabdomyolysis.

#### Asacol (mesalazine) modified release tablets

• Cases of nephrolithiasis have been reported with use of mesalazine. **Action:** Adequate fluid intake is recommended during treatment.

### National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Alert: Antipsychotics are commonly prescribed to people with personality disorders, contrary to guidelines

Commentaries provided on research which found 1 in 4 with personality disorders without a severe mental illness are being prescribed antipsychotics in primary care despite UK guidelines advising against use in this specific population.

### To prevent future deaths – Phototoxicity related to Methotrexate (Ref: 2022-0367)

**Patient background:** Patient had interstitial lung disease and rheumatoid arthritis.

**Medication:** Methotrexate and Leflunomide

**Scenario:** Patient went on holiday and developed pain to upper back with large area skin redness and peeling skin. Patient was admitted to hospital when found on the bedroom floor with reduced consciousness.

**Symptoms:** Low BP, hypoglycaemia, severe neutropenia.

**Cause of death:** Phototoxicity related to methotrexate.

**Concerns:** Phototoxicity occurs when a chemical combined with UV light can lead to skin damaged in the region exposed to sun. It is a rare side effect of methotrexate, but clinicians are encouraged to advise patients to avoid direct sunlight, cover up and use sunscreens when outdoors.

## PRIMARY CARE

### Greenwich Mental Health Hub

Greenwich Mental Health Hub is a collaboration between **Oxleas NHS Trust, Bridge Support and Bromley, Lewisham & Greenwich (BLG) Mind**. It provides a single point of access for adults who need support for self-management of mental health symptoms, recovery and, where indicated, provide access to secondary care and psychological therapies. Please see Attachment 5 on how to refer patients and the interventions being offered.

## Contact Details

**Meds Management:** [greenwich.pharmacy@selondonics.nhs.uk](mailto:greenwich.pharmacy@selondonics.nhs.uk)

**Primary Care:** Jan Matthews:

[jan.matthews@selondonics.nhs.uk](mailto:jan.matthews@selondonics.nhs.uk)

**System Development:** Jo Hare: [joannehare@selondonics.nhs.uk](mailto:joannehare@selondonics.nhs.uk)