

## MEDICINES MANAGEMENT

### Reimbursement Claims for Flu Vaccinations

Practices are reminded to claim reimbursement for the cost of flu vaccines administered to patients.

**Action for practices:** Submit the FP34PD/ FP34D form to the NHSBSA as soon as the vaccinations have been completed before March 2024 to prevent delays in reimbursement and affect the practice prescribing budget 2024/2025.

### Central Alerting System/National Patient Safety (CAS/NPSA) Alert

Practices are reminded to check the CAS/NPSA alerts and action them before their deadlines.

CAS/NPSA alert	Issue Date
Influenza Season 2023/24: Use of antiviral medicines	14/12/2023
Potential for inappropriate dosing of insulin when switching insulin degludec (Tresiba) products	08/12/2023
Potential contamination of some carbomer-containing lubricating eye products with Burkholderia cenocepacia - measures to reduce patient risk	07/12/2023
Valproate: organisations to prepare for new regulatory measures for oversight of prescribing to new patients and existing female patients	28/11/2023

### NPSA alert: for inappropriate dosing of insulin when switching insulin degludec (Tresiba®) products

Tresiba® (insulin degludec) FlexTouch® 100units/ml solution for 3ml pre-filled pens will be out of stock until **December 2024**. In response to this shortage, patients have been switched to 2 alternative options: Tresiba® (insulin degludec) 100 units/ml Penfill® cartridge with a reusable pen device **OR** to FlexTouch® 200units/ml pre-filled pens. Tresiba® FlexTouch® pen delivery devices dial-up in unit increments rather than volume; they do not require dose change.

There were 5 reports of patients being incorrectly advised to reduce the number of units of insulin to be administered. These reports suggest that errors have occurred at the prescribing, dispensing and administration stages of the medicine journey. One case described a patient requiring treatment in the hospital for diabetic ketoacidosis because of a reduced insulin dose. **Action for practices:**

- Refer to the SEL Tresiba® memo (**attachment 1**) that was updated in response to the NPSA alert which includes alternative options, e.g. Tresiba® FlexTouch® 200 units/ml pre-filled pens.
- Ensure patients have been advised appropriately when switching and complete by **22 December 2023**.

### Influenza Season 2023/24: Use Of Antiviral Medicines

Prescribers in primary care can now prescribe, and community pharmacists may now supply antiviral medicines oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) or zanamivir (Relenza®) for the prophylaxis and treatment of influenza at NHS expense. Antiviral medicines may be considered for prescribing for patients in clinical at-risk groups or anyone at risk of severe illness and/or complications from influenza if not treated. Further information can be found here: [CEM\\_CMO\\_2023-003.pdf](#)

### The Monthly Drug Tariff Watch

The Drug Tariff Watch is updated monthly to provide updates on high impacted medicine shortages, price concession and drug tariff prices.

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### Drug Safety Update

#### Aripiprazole (Abilify and generic brands): risk of pathological gambling

There is an increased risk of pathological gambling associated with the use of aripiprazole, including brands such as Abilify®.

**Action for healthcare professionals:** Advise patients to seek medical attention if they experience unusual urges or behaviours while taking aripiprazole before discontinuing the medication.

#### Vitamin B12 (hydroxocobalamin, cyanocobalamin): advise patients with known cobalt allergy to be vigilant for sensitivity reactions.

Caution is advised when prescribing vitamin B12 products to patients with known cobalt allergies due to sensitivity reactions.

**Action for healthcare professionals:** Inform patients with known cobalt sensitivity symptoms, assess the risks and benefits of continuing vitamin B12 treatment and advise patients to seek medical attention for allergic skin reactions.

#### Ozempic ▼ (Semaglutide) and Saxenda (Liraglutide): vigilance is required due to harmful falsified products.

Vigilance is advised for symptoms of hypoglycaemia in patients who may unknowingly use falsified Ozempic® and Saxenda® products, including insulin pens, that pose serious health risks.

**Action for healthcare professionals:** Advise patients not to use suspected pens, seek medical attention for low blood sugar, and obtain prescription medicines only from legitimate sources.

### E-cigarette use or vaping: A reminder

MHRA advises healthcare professionals to remain vigilant for potential adverse reactions related to e-cigarettes (vaping) and **document** their use in the patient's medical records.

### NIHR Alert: Antibiotics make little difference to children's chest infections.

A trial involving 432 children with chest infections, involving 56 GP practices in the UK, found amoxicillin is unlikely to be effective for children with chest infections: children on antibiotics had bad/worse symptoms for 5 days compared to those with 6 days on placebo.

### Online company requesting hormone replacement therapy for transgender patients.

GPs across SEL have been requested by an online company, Gender GP Company, to prescribe hormone replacement treatment for transgender patients. The [interim service specification](#) does not support prescribing puberty-suppressing hormone treatment and gender-affirming hormone treatment in children and young people.

**Action for practices:** Practices are asked **NOT** to accept the transfer of prescribing for hormonal treatment from this company but to raise a quality alert.

### Generic Apixaban

Due to the availability of generic apixaban, significant price reductions and imminent formal communication from NHS England on their commissioning recommendation for a preferred Direct Oral Anticoagulant (DOAC), SEL has advised to pause switching any DOAC unless this is clinically indicated.

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### NEW Greenwich Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) Winter Scheme

Greenwich Medicines Optimisation Team and Community Pharmacies are working in collaboration to improve accessibility to medicines and support vulnerable patients during winter months from **December 2023 to April 2024**. GP reception and clinical teams will now be able to create a CPCS referral for **common winter illnesses**, where patients will be provided with professional health care advice and over-the-counter medicines, including 4-month supply of **vitamin D supplements free of charge** from participating pharmacies.

**Action for practices:** Please see **attachment 2** for a list of pharmacies participating in this local winter scheme.

### NEW Advanced Service: Pharmacy First Service

The **Pharmacist First Service** will be launched on **31 January 2024**. This involves a consultation by a pharmacist, where appropriate, for 7 common conditions for patients presenting to the pharmacy as well as those referred by NHS 111, GPs, and others. Patients may be supplied, where clinically appropriate, with a prescription-only treatment under a patient group direction (PGD) and/or given advice.

### Expansion of NHS Pharmacy Contraception and Blood Pressure Services from 1 December 2023

Community pharmacies will now be able to register to deliver the **NEW expanded NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service** which will include the initiation of oral contraception, switch from one type of contraceptive pill to another and provision of repeat supplies (if clinically appropriate). Individuals will be able to walk in or make an appointment at registered pharmacies, to receive a consultation from an NHS pharmacist. The **NHS Community Pharmacy Blood Pressure Check Service** has expanded to include trained members of the wider pharmacy team. To locate the pharmacies that provide the service, please refer to

[Find Pharmacy Services - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) - public facing.

[Sign into your account - NHS Service Finder](#) - healthcare professionals

### Health Innovation Network (HIN) Opioid Safety Programme

HIN is relaunching its local programme that aims to reduce harm for people with chronic (non-cancer) pain by reducing opioid prescribing. There will be 3 workshops, addressing issues surrounding initiating, de-escalating opioids, and supporting patients living with pain. It will take place **on 18, 30 January and 27 February 2024 from 12.00- 13.00 via MS Teams**. [To book, click here](#).

- Watch the educational film with people living with chronic pain: [experience-based co-design project](#).
- Use the [new resource pack](#) for healthcare professionals around sustaining opioid de-prescribing.
- For more info, please contact [natasha.callender3@nhs.net](mailto:natasha.callender3@nhs.net)

### JCVI recommends childhood chickenpox vaccination.

As part of a routine childhood vaccine schedule, this universal varicella (chickenpox) vaccination programme consists of a 2-dose programme at 12 and 18 months of age using the combined MMR vaccine.

### New and updated guideline

- **NICE (NG238): Cardiovascular disease (CVD): risk assessment and reduction, including lipid modification**
- **SIGN 168: Assessment, diagnosis, care and support for people with dementia and their carers**
- **NICE (NG136): Hypertension in adults: diagnosis and management**

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### Ratified IMOC guidance

- **Adult migraine treatment pathways**, including a triptan decision tree and a **headache diary**, have been developed for **acute** and **preventative** migraine treatment in primary care. As part of the above guidance, the following treatment options are now included in the formulary to support the **acute** and **preventative** treatment of migraine in primary care:

#### Acute migraine treatment

- Zolmitriptan tablets and nasal spray, naratriptan tablets, frovatriptan tablets and rizatriptan orodispersible tablets **Green**
- Eletriptan tablets and almotriptan tablets **Amber 1**
- Sumatriptan injection recategorised **Amber 1**

#### Preventative migraine treatment

- Topiramate tablets recategorised as **Amber 1**
  - Candesartan tablets recategorised as **Green**
  - Nortriptyline tablets as **Green** where a patient is unable to tolerate amitriptyline
- The **SEL Acute Provider Collaborative (SEL APC) adult ear, nose, and throat (ENT) adult primary and secondary interface guidelines** are now available to support the diagnosis and pharmacological management of ENT-related conditions.
  - The **SEL APC urology adult primary care guidelines** are now available to support the diagnosis and pharmacological management of various urological conditions in primary care. The “erectile dysfunction” and “female lower urinary tract symptoms” section has been updated.
  - A **shared care guideline for hydroxycarbamide in paediatrics for the treatment of sickle cell disease** is now available.
  - **Apomorphine (ApoGo™) shared care guideline** was updated to include the new SEL IMOC shared care template and the pregnancy and breastfeeding section.
  - **Formulary inclusion** of colchicine as **Red** for the secondary prevention of ischaemic heart disease in adults. Please refer to [Formulary Recommendation 147](#) for further information.
  - **Formulary inclusion** of azithromycin 15mg/g single-use preservative-free eye drops (Azyter™) for the following indications:
    - Anterior/posterior blepharitis (off-label) **Amber 2**
    - Trachomatous conjunctivitis and bacterial conjunctivitis (licensed indications) **Red**
  - **Formulary inclusions** of bempedoic acid with ezetimibe were re-categorised to **Green**. Bempedoic acid monotherapy re-categorised to **Amber 1**.
    - Refer to the [SEL Joint Medicines Formulary](#) and recently developed [bempedoic acid frequently asked questions](#)
  - [Formulary recommendation 024](#) has been updated to include the 3-monthly paliperidone preparation (Trevicta™) and 6-monthly paliperidone preparation (Byanli™) for the treatment of schizophrenia in adults, in line with updated [paliperidone long-acting injection shared care guideline](#).

### Specialist Pharmacy Service Update

- **Deprescribing of antidepressants for depression and anxiety**
- **Using vitamin D during breastfeeding**
- **Governance principles for unlicensed medicines**
- **Refrigerated medicines stability tool**
- **Managing interactions between macrolides and statins**

## Contact Details

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