



Prescribing News bulletin

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Message of the month

New CCG Website and Update on Prescribing Formularies

With the merger of our previous three CCGs into one West Sussex CCG, and the establishment of the Sussex ICS (Integrated Care System), as well as the Covid-19 pandemic descending on us just at the time of these changes, I must admit that I have found it hard to keep up with all the related developments that have been happening during this crazy time! One of these is the situation of websites – the old CCG websites have now merged onto a new [West Sussex CCG website](#), but the intranet for us to access information as clinicians and staff working in Primary care is under the [Sussex Commissioners website](#).

Since signing up to the new internal website (it requires us all to register and to sign in!), I have been surprised in how much better it is to navigate than the last one. The Medicines Management information is easily accessed on the “Clinical” tab at the top of the home page, and then clicking “Prescribing”. This opens the home page for Medicines Management, and has a very easy set of headings to navigate to, e.g. Formularies, Self-care, and Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD). One area I have personally found very useful, is the information on [“Prescribing during the pandemic”](#).

As the website is an amalgamation of numerous previous websites, it includes information relevant to all three Sussex CCG areas. However, as our previous CCGs did many things in slightly different ways, at present there is still inconsistency in



information on certain topics, and not all CCG areas have all the relevant information documented. This is an area of work in progress, and because of Covid-19, is likely to take a little more time than ideal to bring all the information fully aligned to all regions of Sussex.

The two previous formularies from the former [Coastal CCG](#) and [CHMS CCGs](#) are still being used, and should be accessed in the same way as previously. However, work is afoot to create a single Sussex Formulary, the content of which will be decided by a single Sussex Area Prescribing Committee (APC). The plan is for the Sussex APC to start meeting in April 2021, and one of its first pieces of work will be to align the Formularies; it is envisaged that this very large piece of work will take about a year to complete, and will be carried out by BNF chapter. Please bear with us through this transition – we will endeavour to keep you all updated as to the progress of the work, and on any changes to the way formulary information is accessed.

The Website also contains the section for [Prescribing news bulletins](#) – these restarted back in September, and all previous issues are available on the website. The Prescribing news bulletins are published monthly on the website and emailed to GPs in West Sussex, as well as Practice and PCN Pharmacists and other relevant clinicians and include topics that are relevant to West Sussex or Sussex wide articles. If you would like to add anyone else working in General Practice or in a PCN to the emailing list, please email wsxccg.nmmt@nhs.net.

If you have any feedback or suggestions on the website or the bulletin, please also let us know by emailing wsxccg.nmmt@nhs.net.

I know communication is key when change happens, and two-way communication is vital. This is made somewhat more difficult with the necessary remote working during the pandemic, so please let us know if you can't find important information, or if you have suggestions on how we can communicate better.

Prescribing round-up

Advice to GP practices regarding news reports of a government plan to distribute vitamin D to vulnerable patients

There have been reports in the news today that the UK government is in the process of finalising plans to distribute vitamin D supplements to people in care homes and the clinically extremely vulnerable over the winter months.



Details of this proposal have yet to be confirmed by NHS England hence GP practices receiving queries from patients on the subject are advised to follow the current [Guidance on taking vitamin D supplements during COVID-19](#) which advises that:

- All people should take 10 micrograms of vitamin D a day to maintain bone and muscle health.
- Supplements with the recommended amount of vitamin D can be purchased at low cost from pharmacies, supermarkets and health food stores. In accordance with [National guidance on self care](#), they should not be prescribed.

GP Practices will receive further updates should this guidance change.

Changes to GP/NMP joiners, leavers and amendments process

As a part of the CCGs merging and working together across all Sussex we have reviewed the GP/NMP joiners, leavers and amendments process.

This process will be the same for all GP practices Sussex-wide.

Practices need to ensure they regularly inform the Medicines Management Team of any changes to prescriber details, as having the correct prescriber information on a prescription form is vital to accurately monitor prescribing trends, as well as ensure the correct costs are charged back to the correct practice budget.

Practices will need to select and complete the appropriate [NHSBSA form](#) for joiners, amendments or leavers, which then needs to be authorised by the CCG.

Send the completed form to the Medicines Management Team

- Brighton and Hove and High Weald Lewes Havens: bhccg.mmt@nhs.net
- East Sussex: esxccg.mmt@nhs.net
- West Sussex: wsxccg.nmmt@nhs.net

The CCG will contact you once the prescriber has been registered with the NHS BSA.

A [new process](#) has been put in place and can be found on the intranet, together with example forms.



Freestyle Libre 2 – update

New Abbott [Freestyle Libre 2 Sensors](#) have been added to the [Drug Tariff](#) in November 2020.

The new sensors

- Have additional and optional Bluetooth alarm functionality that alerts users in real-time of hypoglycaemia and hyperglycaemia.
- Have an alarm functionality that is only operational with the compatible 'Freestyle Libre 2 Reader' and 'Freestyle Libre Link App', but not with the original Freestyle Libre Reader.
- If used with the original Freestyle Libre Reader, interstitial glucose levels will be available but without the alarm functionality.
- Are the same price as the original Freestyle Libre Sensors.
- Are yet to go through local APC processes for approval to the Joint Formulary.

The specialist diabetes services are currently working on plans to roll out how to switch over to the new sensors. This would include patient education; which groups to prioritise (e.g. those with hypoglycaemia unawareness or severe hypoglycaemia); and the provision of the new compatible readers.

Action

GPs should continue to prescribe the original 'Freestyle Libre Sensors' until they have had confirmation from the specialist that the patients have received the training and have been switched over to the 'Freestyle Libre 2 Sensors'.

Further information to follow in due course.

Which flu vaccines can be given to people with an egg-allergy?

Most influenza vaccines are produced using hens' eggs and contain ovalbumin, although cell based production is likely to become more important in future years.

The [ovalbumin content](#) of influenza vaccines is published prior to the influenza season. There is one quadrivalent inactivated egg-free vaccine (Flucelvax® TETRA) but this is only licensed for patients from 9 years of age. The ovalbumin content of other inactivated influenza vaccines varies. Those that are classed as 'egg-free' or have a very low ovalbumin content (i.e. <0.12micrograms/ml, equivalent to <0.06 micrograms per 0.5ml dose) can be given safely to most patients with an egg-allergy.



Summary of the recommendations

Children or adults who have had severe anaphylaxis to egg which has previously required intensive care should be referred to specialist for assessment regarding receiving the immunisation in a hospital setting.

Adults with an egg allergy that has NOT required treatment in intensive care may safely be immunised in any setting using an inactivated influenza vaccine with ovalbumin content <0.12 micrograms/ml (equivalent to 0.06 micrograms per 0.5ml dose).

Children with an egg-allergy, including those who have had severe anaphylaxis but which has NOT previously required intensive care, can be safely vaccinated with LAIV (Fluenz Tetra®) in any setting, including primary care and schools. LAIV is the preferred vaccine for this group since the intranasal route is less likely to cause systemic reactions. Children with clinical risk factors that contraindicate LAIV should be offered an inactivated influenza vaccine with ovalbumin content <0.12 micrograms/ml.

In all settings providing vaccination, **facilities should be available and staff trained to recognise and treat anaphylaxis.**

A list of influenza vaccines for the season is updated annually in [National flu immunisation programme plan](#). Further information on influenza immunisation is available in [Green Book: Chapter 19](#).

Product Licensing restrictions for sale of OTC Medicines

PrescQIPP have published a [Self-care guide](#) which lists self-care medicines available for purchase over the counter (OTC) in pharmacy to treat self-limiting and short-term minor illnesses.

It covers the licensed indications of pharmacy self-care medicines and highlights where the licensing exceptions would prohibit the product to be sold OTC.

This guide can be used when referring patients to community pharmacies to purchase OTC medicines for the purpose of self-care; to ensure that incidence of inappropriate referrals are reduced/avoided.



Over ordering and stockpiling medication

Huge pressure is being put on primary care and community pharmacists with extra ordering of medicines. We want to reassure people in the Sussex area that there is no need to do anything new or different with medicines ordering. People should order their prescriptions and take their medicines as normal.

Stockpiling or purchasing medication that is not needed increases the risk of shortages by disrupting the normal supply chain and thus disadvantage other patients.

Patients on medicines for long-term medical conditions should order repeat medication within **7 – 10 days** of their current medication running out.

For Practices and Patients that use Prescription Ordering Direct (POD)

In the Brighton & Hove and High Weald, Lewes and Havens area, please be aware we will not be able to order medications early and will continue to order when the patients have 7 days' worth of medication left.

However, there will be flexibility for early ordering to take account of the two week Christmas period, where POD will be able to order early and a call handler will discuss this with the patient.

POD Christmas Hours

- Monday to Friday 8 am – 4 pm
- We will be closed 25th & 28th December 2020 and the 1st January 2021

Additional prescription requests for tube feed to cover the Christmas period

Please be aware that the delivery dates for some patients receiving home enteral tube feeds and the associated ancillary items will be adjusted for the Christmas period only.

This means that the companies making the deliveries, Fresenius Kabi and Nutricia Homeward, will request two feed prescriptions in quick succession from GP practices in the run up to Christmas.

The delivery schedule and prescription requests will return to normal after Christmas and New Year, but please contact the managing dietetics service for any specific patient queries.



Drug safety updates

Every report counts: report suspected adverse drug reactions

As part of #MedSafetyWeek, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has published a reminder to remain vigilant for adverse drug reactions and report them to the Yellow Card Scheme.

Healthcare professionals are encouraged

- to report suspected adverse drug reactions to the [Yellow Card scheme](#) online or via the Yellow Card app (download from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#))
- when prescribing, repeat prescribing, dispensing, administering or reviewing medicines, consider discussing the possible side effects with patients
- to use the product information for medicines to find information on interactions, relevant precautions, and safety monitoring advice and to talk to colleagues about the importance of following the product information advice on monitoring and being vigilant for new adverse reactions
- to sign up to receive monthly alerts for [Drug Safety Update](#) and other safety information from the MHRA about medicines and medical devices – these messages are also available through the Yellow Card app.

Further information is available on the [MHRA website](#).