

To contact NHS BSW ICB Medicines Optimisation Team:

✉ bswicb.prescribing@nhs.net

Website: <https://bswtogether.org.uk/medicines/>

BSW Area Prescribing Committee (APC) Updates (see all recent decisions in full [here](#))

New additions to BSWformulary

Zoely® (norgestrel acetate and estradiol hemihydrate) tablets – Added with **green** TLS; restricted to use as a third-line option where women have experienced side effects on first- and second-line combined pills, who are >40 years of age and perimenopausal

SyreniRing® (ethinylestradiol/etonogestrel) – Added with **green** TLS; this contraceptive vaginal ring (CVR) contains the same active ingredients as NuvaRing. SyreniRing does not require refrigeration and has a shelf-life of two years. More information on vaginal contraceptive rings CVRs here <https://www.fsrh.org/news/fsrh-ceu-statement-availability-and-dispensing-of-combined/>

Emollin spray – Added with **green** TLS; restricted to use as a second-line option for very painful or fragile skin where there is difficulty with 'hands on' application of creams/ointments or where a spray allows self-application, negating the need for DN/HCP visits. Remind patient of risks of spray formulation. Clothing and bedding with emollient products dried onto them can be easily ignited with a naked flame. Inadvertent spraying on floor surfaces could lead to slips.

Adex gel – Added with **green** TLS; restricted to use as a second-line option for facial inflammatory conditions - eczema, psoriasis, perioral dermatitis, seborrhoeic dermatitis. Useful in specific groups of patients where topical steroid sparing is required but Topical Calcineurin Inhibitors (tacrolimus, pimecrolimus) not tolerated/effective or reduced Topical Corticosteroid frequencies are giving flare.

Zeyzef® (rivastigmine twice weekly) patches – Added to **non-formulary** section. These twice weekly rivastigmine patches, launched in the UK in Sept 2023 are considered **non-formulary**.

There is a risk of incorrect application due to unfamiliarity with this dosing; Zeyzef is not available in all strengths and there is no cost-advantage of using Zeyzef. Please continue to prescribe rivastigmine patches in line with our [local Shared Care Agreement](#) and as per [PWSL](#).

Vydura® (Rimegepant) 75mg oral lyophilisate – Added with **red** TLS.

Rimegepant (Vydura) is a calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP) receptor antagonist available as an oral lyophilisate costing £12.90 per 75 mg tablet.

NICE have recently published two separate recommendations for rimegepant:

- [Overview | Rimegepant for preventing migraine | Guidance | NICE](#) (Published July 2023) **For preventing episodic migraine** in adults who have ≥4 and fewer than 15 migraine attacks per month, only if at least 3 preventative treatments have not worked. **Currently RED Traffic Light Status for prevention indication** while commissioners consider a business case.
- [Overview | Rimegepant for treating acute migraine | Guidance | NICE](#) (Published October 2023) **For the acute treatment of migraine** with or without aura in adults, only if for previous migraines: at least 2 triptans were tried and they did not work well enough OR triptans were contraindicated or not tolerated, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and paracetamol were tried but did not work well enough. **Currently not to be used for acute treatment indication.** Will be available for prescribing ~January 2024 after the 90 day NICE implementation period which allows discussion on Traffic Light Status and time to update treatment pathways and prescribing systems.

Please **continue to follow** the [BSW Chronic Migraine Pathway for primary care](#) which has had a minor update to reflect this information and will be revised again in 2024.

Change in Traffic Light status

Xaqua® metolazone 5mg tablets - Added with **amber** TLS.

In recent years metolazone was only available in the UK as an unlicensed (imported) product which was assigned red TLS across BSW. Now, there is a licensed 5mg tablet formulation with brand name Xaqua®. **Prescribing and supply of metolazone should be BRAND SPECIFIC; Xaqua® is the approved brand in BSW. All existing and new patients are expected to now be using Xaqua®.** Unintentional switching between products may result in toxicity or subtherapeutic effects as the bioavailability of Xaqua® is up to two-fold higher than other brands. Further comprehensive information on indication, dosing and bioavailability to support safe prescribing of Xaqua® is available in the MHRA alert [here](#) and SPS link [here](#). **If patients are currently receiving unlicensed supplies of metolazone in primary care, we recommend consulting specialist teams or bswicb.prescribing@nhs.net for advice.**

Icosapent ethyl – Changed from amber to **green** traffic light.

One year on from the publication of NICE Guidance TA805 [Overview: Icosapent ethyl with statin therapy for reducing the risk of cardiovascular events in people with raised triglycerides](#), the TLS of Icosapent ethyl is revised from amber to green now information to support optimising lipid management in primary care is available in the [National guideline for lipid management](#). Local specialists support these reminders for prescribing in primary care:

Criteria:

For use in patients with established CVD

- Need to be taking a statin.
- Latest triglycerides (1.7mmol/L or above) and LDL-c above 1.04mmol/L but ≤ 2.60mmol/L.

Cautions for use:

- Patients with known hypersensitivity to fish and/or shellfish – it is not clear whether these patients are at an increased risk of allergic reaction.
- Patients with known hepatic impairment should have ALT & AST checked at the start and during treatment.
- Patients should be counselled on the increased risk of atrial fibrillation or flutter, along with signs and symptoms of this. Patients with a known history of atrial Fibrillation or atrial flutter may be at greatest risk; consider an ECG when clinically indicated.

All patients should be counselled on the increased risk of bleeding, along with signs and symptoms of this. Patients taking concomitant antiplatelet or antithrombotic medication may be at a greater risk and should be monitored periodically

BSW Area Prescribing Committee (APC) Updates-continued

New and Updated Shared Care Agreements and Prescribing Guidance

[BSW SCA for DMARDs in adults](#) Now incorporates GWH gastroenterology service which allowed us to retire an old 3Ts azathioprine/mercaptopurine SCA. Also updates to sulfasalazine monitoring section [once stable, common local practice is to monitor U&Es annually] and to the shingles vaccination national programme information. Some minor typographical corrections including updates to some contact details.

[BSW Emollient products for adults and children](#) – Updated guidance produced with collaboration from BSW dermatology specialists. We remind prescribers that patients with **mild dry skin can be successfully managed purchasing their own over the counter products** on a long-term basis. **Emollients should only be prescribed for long term dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis or other inflammatory conditions.** Prescribers should use the clinically appropriate emollient with the lowest acquisition cost first line. **Please also refer to our Quick Reference Guide to [BSW First Line Emollients document for first line preferences.](#)** In the event of supply problems, where preferred brands are not available, please change to a different brand of similar cost with similar ingredients. Specialists may use their clinical judgement to consider bath/shower emollients for specific patients e.g. noncompliance with regular emollients of more than one emollient/type or patients with painful skin conditions who cannot tolerate emollient creams/ointments. The reasons for prescribing outside the formulary should be clearly documented.

[BSW Guidelines for use of melatonin in children](#) – Update includes **generic melatonin 2mg m/r tablets** as a first line alternative to Adaflex® immediate release tablets and the first line prolonged release option instead of Circadin®. Also includes newly licensed (for ADHD, used off-label for ASD related sleep problems) **Ceyesto® 1mg/ml oral solution** as preferred brand when liquid formulation is required. These changes present significant cost savings for the BSW system. Formulary has been updated here [Formulary \(bswformulary.nhs.uk\)](#)

Minor amendments to Netformulary

Alphosyl 2 in 1 shampoo and Selsun shampoo discontinued and removed from formulary; [Neutrogena T-GEL shampoo \(coal tar 2%\)](#) 125ml and 250ml added with self-care TLS.

Dihydrocodeine 10mg/5ml oral solution discontinued and removed from formulary.

Updates made to formulary positioning of relevant **antivirals** for Covid in line with [NICE TA878](#). Local access information updated in relevant entries here [Formulary \(bswformulary.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Estraderm MX estradiol patches](#) added in addition to Evorel and Estradot in line with [SSP057 Estradot 100mcg patches.pdf \(nhsbsa.nhs.uk\)](#)

TLS for oral **ondansetron** aligned as green for all indications. TLS for ondansetron injection remains amber. [Formulary \(bswformulary.nhs.uk\)](#)

[vancomycin intravitreal injection](#) and [ethanol 20% injection](#) (for corneal delamination) aligned with RED TLS across all trusts.

[Prucalopride](#) - Removed wording that indicated prucalopride was only locally approved for use in females. License now includes men and women.

Yuflyma® brand added to [adalimumab entries](#); Yuflyma® now first line biosimilar across BSW.

Amendments to brand names of anterior pituitary hormones (red TLS) used in fertility indications <https://bswformulary.nhs.uk/>

CoaguChek Testing Strips- SELECT WITH CARE

We have recently been made aware that some practices across BSW prescribe CoaguChek PT test strips for DNs to use so we have removed the red TLS flag associated with these strips. These can now be prescribed, and we are in the process of creating a message to remind prescribers to select the correct test strips for the correct machine, e.g., “double check strips are compatible with the meter being used”.

When prescribing please select **with care** as prescribing the wrong strips can be costly.

CoaguChek PT Test Strips - These are **compatible with the CoaguChek PRO II Meter** (To be used within a healthcare professional setting)

CoaguChek XS PT Test PST Strips - These are **compatible with the CoaguChek INRange meter**. (To be used by a patient at home)

CoaguChek XS PT Test Strips - These are **compatible with the CoaguChek XS Plus meter** which was discontinued a few years ago. (To be used within a healthcare professional setting)

Product Name	Price	Status
COAGUCHEK PT	14682	48
COAGUCHEK SOFTCLIX	7510	24
COAGUCHEK XS PT	14682	48
COAGUCHEK XS PT TEST PST	7510	24

CoaguChek PT Test	06688721	48	14682
CoaguChek XS PT	04625358 04625315	24 48	7510 14682
CoaguChek XS PT Test PST	07671687019	24	7510

INR -patient self-testing & self-monitoring

For guidance on consideration of prescribing for patient self testing please see-

[INR Self Testing Guidance](#)

National Medicines Optimisation opportunities - **Shortest Effective Course** of Antibiotics

Thank you for your ongoing personal commitment in tackling antimicrobial resistance (AMR). We would like to invite you to join us by taking urgent action to prevent AMR across all sectors of the healthcare system. The UK National Action Plan for AMR sets out ambitions and measures of success to ensure progress towards the UK 20-year vision for addressing AMR. A new resource to support leaders and teams to understand priorities and improve AMR prevention has been developed within the NHS Model Health System. Prescribing the shortest effective course of antibiotics is one of 16 national medicines optimisation opportunities for ICBs recommended, see [National medicines optimisation opportunities 2023/24](#)

In **Primary Care** setting, we would like to encourage you to **support prescribing the shortest effective course of antibiotics, following NICE guidelines.** Patients should be advised to take antibiotics as directed, not to save for later or share with others, and to return any unused antibiotics to community pharmacies for safe disposal.

You can find out further details and rationale on optimising antibiotics course length via the **Special AMS MOP-UP** edition [here](#)

ACTION: Check if your organisation's antimicrobial prescribing is optimised as per NICE and local guidelines to prevent harm from AMR, now, and in the future!

[Medicines Optimisation website](#)

To ensure you are always using the most **up to date** information, please always check and search for our latest documents and information via the [BSW ICB Medicines Optimisation Team website](#) and not via a search engine which may have out of date information.

New documents

Presentation - Dermatology Update (Pharmacy Teaching)

<https://bswtogether.org.uk/medicines/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/11/Dermatology-Pharmacy-Teaching.pdf>

Presentation - Polypharmacy (West of England Health Innovation Network) overview & SMR update

<https://bswtogether.org.uk/medicines/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/11/BSW-POLYpharm-08-11-23.pdf>

Updated documents

Presentation - Community Pharmacy Update

<https://bswtogether.org.uk/medicines/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/11/Community-Pharmacy-Update-Webinar-12.07.23-v2.pdf>

BSW Prescribing 2023-24 Savings Recommendations Prescribe Well – Spend Less (Nov 2023 v39)

<https://bswtogether.org.uk/medicines/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/11/Prescribe-Well-Spend-Less-V39-November-2023.pdf>

Eclipse Safety (updated link)

BSW practices would be able to access the eclipse interface via <https://secure.nhspathways.org/nhspathways/login.aspx>

Launch of two new strengths of azathioprine tablets - 75mg and 100mg

Two new strengths of azathioprine have been launched in the UK, Azathioprine **75mg** and **100mg** tablets. These are higher in strength than the azathioprine products which are currently available (**25mg** and **50mg**). Caution is therefore required if prescribing and dispensing this medicine to ensure that the patient receives the dose intended. There is a **potential risk of overdose** if the wrong dose is prescribed or dispensed. More information can be found [here](#). Please note these new strengths are **NOT** included in [Formulary \(bswformulary.nhs.uk\)](#) they are being reviewed by the Area Prescribing Committee and should **NOT** currently be used.

Medicines shortages - local tips

Firstly, BSW ICB would like to thank you all for the hard work from both practices and CPs given the ongoing difficulty of the national out of stocks situation.

The best way to tackle these ongoing issues is for our pharmacies and surgeries to be talking regularly and building strong relationships.

We have worked with Community Pharmacy Avon & Community Pharmacy Swindon & Wiltshire and Wessex LMC to come up with some guidance for both practices and CPs to follow to ensure the patient has access to medications in a timely way and to **reduce the need for returning the patient to the GP** to provide a new prescription.

Please review the Medicines shortages -local tips document found [here](#) and **share with all relevant Health Care Professionals**.

The Medication unavailable request form found

[here](#) has been included as may be a useful tool to facilitate these communications.

Both documents can also be found on the ICB medicines shortage page [Stock Shortages - Medicines \(bswtogether.org.uk\)](#)

ADHD medicines supply disruption

SPS have published a series of national resources to support the ongoing management of supply disruption of medicines used to treat ADHD.

[Continuing management of the ADHD medicines shortage](#)

[Supporting system response to the ADHD medicine shortage](#)

[Considerations when prescribing guanfacine](#)

[Considerations when prescribing modified-release methylphenidate](#)

[Prescribing available medicines to treat ADHD](#)

These resources can be considered alongside our own local information, available on the ICB medicines shortage page [Stock Shortages - Medicines \(bswtogether.org.uk\)](#)

£££££ Cost saving drug switch of the month: Vagifem/Vagirux 10mcg pessaries to Estradiol 10mcg pessaries ££££££££

By prescribing Vagifem/Vagirux **generically as Estradiol 10mcg pessaries** across BSW ICB approximately **£130k could be saved** over a period of 12 months. Added benefit of **reducing plastic waste** due to reusable applicators (as with Vagirux). Vagifem may be prescribed in circumstances where individual applicators are necessary.

	Pack size	Cost	Saving
Estradiol 10microgram pessaries	24	£8.57	NA
Vagirux 10microgram vaginal tablets	24	£11.34	£2.77
Vagifem 10microgram vaginal tablets	24	£16.71	£8.14

Drug interactions with smoking

[Considering drug interactions with smoking](#)

SPS have published a page on considering drug interactions with smoking tobacco. This guides users to consider how smoking (or starting or stopping smoking) can impact drug metabolism. It also covers which patients are most at risk and how to manage these interactions.

[Managing specific interactions with smoking](#)

SPS has produced a page on managing specific drug interactions in people who stop, start or restart smoking tobacco. Users can refer to this at the point of care for guidance on whether monitoring and/or dose changes may be needed for certain medicines in smokers/ex-smokers.