

# Medicines Optimisation Newsletter

## [March 2025] (Issue No.69)



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## Kent and Medway ICB Updates

### Update on the implementation of The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) technology appraisal TA 1026: Tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity

On Tuesday, 24 December 2024, NICE released the [technology appraisal \(TA 1026\) on the use of Tirzepatide \(Mounjaro\) for managing overweight and obesity](#). We understand that this will likely lead to a significant number of queries regarding the potential use of this medication.

So, to clarify:

**Currently, there should be no prescribing of Mounjaro (tirzepatide) for NICE TA 1026 (Tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity) in primary care.**

NICE has mentioned in their communication on this NICE technology appraisal (TA) that NHS England will be releasing commissioning criteria/guidelines early in 2025, which will give further information on the pathway for this medication when used for obesity for the NHS and integrated care boards across the country: [NICE information on how weight loss drug tirzepatide will be rolled out](#).

Within Kent and Medway, we will work with these guidelines to develop pathways that provide an equitable approach for all patients. This is likely to take a phased approach, starting with those patients at greatest clinical need.

There is a 180-day implementation period for this TA, so we anticipate sharing full pathways by the middle of 2025. This longer implementation will help make sure development of pathways that focus on safe prescribing and “wrap around care” such as diet and lifestyle advice. We will release information regarding pathways regularly, as they are developed.

This communication has been shared with colleagues working in primary and secondary care to ensure consistency in approach.

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Any prescribing currently held by private providers should be retained by them to ensure equitable approach to those patients who will be offered this medication under the NHS. For more information on this, please see : [information on prescriptions issues after private-consultation](#) and [mixing private and NHS treatment](#). Please note, this does not affect those patients suitable for Mounjaro (tirzepatide) in line with [NICE guidance on tirzepatide for treating type 2 diabetes TA 924](#).

Where tirzepatide is recommended **for treating type 2 diabetes** alongside diet and exercise in adults when it is insufficiently controlled **only if**:

- triple therapy with metformin and 2 other oral antidiabetic drugs is ineffective, not tolerated or contraindicated, and
- they have a body mass index (BMI) of 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more, and specific psychological or other medical problems associated with obesity, **or**
- they have a BMI of less than 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, **and**:
  - insulin therapy would have significant occupational implications, **or**
  - weight loss would benefit other significant obesity-related complications.

(Use lower BMI thresholds (usually reduced by 2.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) for people from South Asian, Chinese, other Asian, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean family backgrounds).

Additionally, we would like to remind all colleagues that there should be no off-label prescribing for GLP-1 RA, such as semaglutide i, i.e. Ozempic should not be requested or prescribed for weight loss.

Wegovy (the licensed product) is currently only available from specialist weight services in Kent and Medway: [Information about weight loss medication](#).

#### **Kent and Medway ICB response to National Patient Safety Alert for PERT**

The National Patient Safety Alert regarding the [Shortage of Pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy \(PERT\)](#) highlights that Creon® will remain limited in supply until 2026 and while alternatives such as Nutrizym® 22 capsules and Pancrex V® capsules and powder are intermittently available, they are unable to fully cover the gap in supply .

In response to this alert a flow chart has been developed outlining the process to be followed for patients within Kent and Medway who are unable to obtain supplies of PERT from a community pharmacy or, where applicable, their dispensing practice. Please see the attached flow chart for full details.

[issue-69-pert-flow-chart.pdf](#)

[issue-69-new-customer-verification-form.pdf](#)

For any further advice and information please contact:

Community Pharmacy England: [Admin@kentipc.org.uk](mailto:Admin@kentipc.org.uk)

NHS Kent and Medway ICB Medicines Optimisation Team: [kmicb.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net](mailto:kmicb.medicinesoptimisation@nhs.net)

#### **Buspirone prescribing in primary care**

We would like to remind practices that **Buspirone should not be initiated in primary care** and is not routinely prescribed for Generalised anxiety disorder by Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care and Partnership Trust (KMPT) and would only be initiated by a specialist if other therapies have failed.

Buspirone has a delayed onset of action and can take a few weeks to show effects, therefore it is not effective for treating acute anxiety. It is licensed for short term use only.

Please ensure new patients are not initiated on Buspirone unless other therapies recommended by [NICE guidelines](#) have failed and only if it recommended by a specialist.

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### New winter lung health guide to support your patients

For people living with a lung condition, the risk of ending up in A&E doubles in the winter. This is because things like cold weather, winter viruses, damp and mould can make symptoms worse. This means winter can be a scary and dangerous time for people with lung conditions.

To support everyone with a lung condition, Asthma + Lung UK have created a **free winter guide** to help people protect themselves and stay well this winter. To get the guide, patients just need to answer a short survey about their lung condition, symptoms and how winter affects them. They will then receive a series of emails with free, personalised health advice from Asthma + Lung UK's in-house GP, Dr Andy Whittamore.

The guide will help people to understand what might set off their symptoms during the winter and provide personalised tips to reduce their risk of becoming seriously unwell.

Share our guide today to help people look after their lung health over the coming months and enjoy the winter season

[Get our winter lung health guide today](#)

And don't forget our friendly [Helpline](#) are always on hand to support people to stay well over the winter too.

### Asthma + Lung UK's 2025 Life with a Lung Condition survey - now open

The survey aims to capture valuable insights into the experiences of people living with a lung condition, and those that care for people living with a lung condition. Please share with your networks, colleagues **and patients** so that it can reach as many people living with a lung condition as possible.

You can find the survey here: <https://asthmaandlung.eu.typeform.com/lungsurvey>

### Children's pages on the Healthcare Professionals' Hub

The section on children's asthma is now [live](#). The section is packed with information about how to assess, diagnose and treat children with asthma.

As a reminder, these pages guide novice level healthcare professionals through the 'brilliant basics' of respiratory diagnosis, treatment and ongoing management. The pages will expand over the coming months to cover all lung conditions, interwoven with our health advice and support materials throughout.

### Would you like to join our discussion group about easy read resources?

We're improving our accessible resources about asthma and other lung conditions, and we'd love your input!

We're running two focus groups for professionals that work with people who use easy read information:

- Tuesday 4 March 6.30pm to 7.30pm on Microsoft Teams
- Thursday 6 March 12pm to 1pm on Microsoft Teams

Please confirm your attendance by filling out [this form](#). For any questions, email [awilliams@asthmaandlung.org.uk](mailto:awilliams@asthmaandlung.org.uk).

### Would you like to join our discussion group about resources to help people stop smoking and vaping?

We're improving our web information and printed booklet about stopping smoking and vaping when you have asthma or another lung condition, and we'd love your input!

We're running two focus groups for healthcare professionals on:

- Thursday 27 March 12pm to 1pm on Microsoft Teams
- Thursday 27 March 6.30pm to 7.30pm on Microsoft Teams.

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Please confirm your attendance by filling out [this form](#) by Friday 21 March. For any questions, email [awilliams@asthmaandlung.org.uk](mailto:awilliams@asthmaandlung.org.uk).

### **MHRA Valproate Guidance: Ensuring Safe Prescribing and Risk Minimisation**

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has released updated infographics to support safe prescribing practices and enhance patient safety regarding valproate use. These resources outline essential risk minimisation measures required for prescribing valproate across different patient groups.

The guidance includes specific considerations for:

- Female patients less than 55 years old: [250213 MHRA Valproate Infographic Female under 55 CC V7.pdf](#)
- Male patients less than 55 years old: [250213 MHRA Valproate Infographic Male under 55 CC V7.pdf](#)
- Patients that are 55 years or over: [250213 MHRA Valproate Infographic 55 or older CC V7.pdf](#)

## **National Updates**

### **MHRA Drug Safety Update**

The latest MHRA Drug Safety Updates can be accessed at [Drug Safety Update - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). This includes links to alerts, recalls and safety information and to the monthly Drug Safety Update PDF newsletter.

### **MHRA Drug Safety Updates Published up to 17 March 2025:**

[Prolonged-release opioids: Removal of indication for relief of post-operative pain - GOV.UK](#) (Published 12 March 2025)

The indication for the treatment of post-operative pain has been removed from the licences of all prolonged release opioids due to the increased risk of persistent post-operative opioid use (PPOU) and opioid-induced ventilatory impairment (OIVI).

### **The February Drug Safety Update includes:**

[Letters and medicine recalls sent to healthcare professionals in January 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

[Valproate \(Belvo, Convulex, Depakote, Dyazantil, Epilim, Epilim Chrono or Chronosphere, Episenta, Epival, and Syonell ▼\): review by two specialists is required for initiating valproate but not for male patients already taking valproate - GOV.UK](#) (Published 13 February 2025)

Review by two specialists remains in place for patients initiating valproate under 55 years of age but the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) has advised that it will not be required for men (or males) currently taking valproate.

### **A Message from the MHRA on Changes to Drug Safety Update**

"This is the first DSU which we have published as a standalone article as part of our new strategy we launched in September 2024: the [MHRA's strategy for Improving Safety Communications](#).

A key focus within our first year was to redesign the look and feel of our safety communications. This includes some changes to our DSU which you subscribe to.

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We have today published our first DSU article using the [newly redesigned layout](#), and you will notice that we have amended the publication schedule for these. Previously we were publishing all our articles once a month at the end of the month, however we have now moved to publishing these articles throughout the month. In addition to these changes, we are launching a new safety bulletin called MHRA Safety Round-Up. This will be published in the last week of each month and will comprise of a summary of each of the DSU and Device Safety Information (DSI) articles which were published in the month.

As well as this, there will be a new 'News Round-Up' section which will include updates to reviews and product information or more safety adjacent work which may not have warranted a full DSU/DSI alert but may be of interest to healthcare professionals.

And as usual, the new bulletin will include links to all recalls and direct healthcare professional communications (DHPC) which were sent in the last month."

**\*\*Please follow the link in the titles above for more information and resources.\*\***

### **NATIONAL CAS ALERTS (National Patient Safety Alerts and CMO Messages):**

The MHRA Central Alerting System alerts can be accessed at [CAS - Home \(mhra.gov.uk\)](#)  
[Discontinuation of Promixin \(colistimethate\) 1-million unit powder for nebuliser solution unit dose vials](#)  
**(Published 17 March 2025)**

Promixin® (colistimethate) 1-million-unit powder for nebuliser solution unit dose vials (UDVs) are being discontinued from early May 2025, with stocks anticipated to be exhausted by this date.

This National Patient Safety Alert provides further background, clinical information and actions for providers.

### **Shortages Summary**

From February 2024 onwards, the monthly Medicines Optimisation newsletter will no longer contain the medicines shortages update document, which was compiled each month from the shortages listed on the SPS (Specialist Pharmacy Services) Medicines Supply tool. The information published on the SPS Medicines Supply tool is provided by DHSC and NHSEI Medicines Supply Teams and was not formally reviewed by the NHS Kent and Medway Medicines Optimisation team.

During the time that the shortages update was compiled and included in the Medicines Optimisation newsletter, practices and healthcare professionals were still encouraged to **register for free access to the [SPS website](#)** and to **access the SPS Medicines Supply tool directly** in real time, to have access to the most up-to-date and complete information and advice available. Now that the shortages update will no longer be compiled by the Medicines Optimisation team for inclusion in the newsletter, healthcare professionals will be required to access the SPS Medicines Supply tool to access information on the latest shortages. Serious Shortage Protocols (SPPs) can be found on the NHS BSA website [here](#).

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