



North East and North Cumbria

Our Reference PA\ North East & North
Cumbria ICB\ICB127

Your Reference ICB127

NECS - John Snow House
Durham University Science Park
Durham
DH1 3YG

Tel: (0191) 301 1300
Fax: (0191) 374 4102
E-mail: Necsu.icbfoi@nhs.net

24 November 2022

By Email

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Request for Information – NHS North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

Thank you for your request received by North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) on 8 November 2022 for information held by NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

For information Clinical Commissioning Groups ceased to exist on 30 June 2022. Services that were previously delivered by the CCG are now being delivered by the successor organisation NHS North East and North Cumbria (ICB). This covers the areas of County Durham, Newcastle Gateshead, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Tees Valley.

Please find the information you requested on behalf of the ICB as follows.

Request

I am writing to make a Freedom of Information request regarding the availability or restrictions on liquid formulation antidepressants within your ICS.

We have reviewed the available information on the South Tyneside and Sunderland formulary website and there does not seem to be much information about restrictions on the use of liquid formulations.

Please could you let me know the following with reference to the primary care prescribing of antidepressants for depression and/or anxiety:

1. Are there any internal documents or guidelines that restrict the prescribing of liquid antidepressants?
2. Do you have any guidance for prescribers regarding tapering of antidepressants? If so, could you provide a copy of the relevant documents.
3. Do you use any prescribing decision support software, or other tools such as PMR system searches, which identify prescribing of liquid antidepressants and recommend a switch to other formulations?
4. Do you engage in any proactive correspondence with practices to encourage other formulations over liquid formulations? Please do not hesitate to contact me via this email address should anything require clarification.

Response

County Durham

1. No

2. Yes - This information is exempt from disclosure in accordance with section 21 of the Act as it is available by reasonable alternative means. This information is publicly available here: <https://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/download/tewv-medicines-optimisation-interactive-guide/?tmstv=1668073435>

3. Yes – optimiseRx

4. If appropriate for that patient/formulation

Newcastle Gateshead

1 No, but we would expect prescribing to be in line with the formulary: <http://northoftyneandgatesheadformulary.nhs.uk/default.asp>

2 We have a guide to support prescribers in deprescribing dosulepin in line with NHSE guidance. However, it is expired and requires review. Out of date document attached "Position statement dosulepin in primary care v1.0".

3 Yes, Optimiserx. We have messages switched on to advise switching away from a liquid preparation.

4 No

North Cumbria

1. No. We recommend prescribers to follow North of Tyne formulary <http://northoftyneandgatesheadformulary.nhs.uk/> We have guidance on use of licensed/unlicensed medicines <https://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/download/special-order-pharmaceuticals-prescriber-guide/?tmstv=1668174278> Our internal documents do not explore prescribing and signpost to specialists and NICE guidance – see attachment "Depression in Children and Adolescents - Community HealthPathways North Cumbria".

2. No. We signpost to NICE guidance as per Q1.

3. We use Optimise Rx.

Amitriptyline

Oral solution/suspension 10mg in 5ml (unlicensed) to oral solution sugar free 10mg/5ml (licensed), 1 entry.

Dosulepin

Oral suspension (unlicensed) to oral solution (unlicensed), 1 entry

As above to tablets (licensed), 1 entry.

Fluoxetine

Fluoxetine oral solution 20mg in 5ml to capsules, 1 entry.

Fluoxetine oral solution sugar free 20mg in 5ml to fluoxetine 20mg dispersible tablets, 1 entry.

Fluoxetine oral liquids to fluoxetine 20mg dispersible tablets, 1 entry.

Paroxetine

Paroxetine 10mg/5ml sugar free oral suspension – product discontinuation notice, 1 entry.

Trazodone

Trazodone oral solution sugar free to solid-dose formulations, 1 entry.

Venlafaxine

Venlafaxine oral solutions (unlicensed) to venlafaxine tablets (licensed) – off label use, 2 entries.

Venlafaxine oral solutions (unlicensed) to venlafaxine oral solution sugar free (licensed), 2 entries.

4. Only for unlicensed medicines. We recommend practices prescribe these in line with MHRA and other relevant guidance. <https://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/download/special-order-pharmaceuticals-prescriber-guide/?tmstv=1668602736>

North Tyneside and Northumberland

1. The North of Tyne, Gateshead and North Cumbria APC formulary details antidepressant choice, the APC has also endorsed a Swallowing Difficulties guideline. Beyond these guidelines there are no further documents regarding liquid antidepressants.

2. No.

3. Both Sub ICB Locations use Optimise RX

There are several messages active in Northumberland and North Tyneside that would advise a switch away from a liquid preparation, either from a cost or licensing perspective, depending on clinical circumstances and the ability of a patient to swallow. These messages are all for consideration, rather than direction. E.g.

> [Fluoxetine oral liquids \(brands, generics\): consider swapping to fluoxetine 20mg dispersible tablets](#)

4. Other than advice in APC formulary which says fluoxetine dispersible in preference to liquid there's no other advice to clinicians.

South Tyneside

1. There are documents restricting the use of liquid antidepressants

2. There is a guideline for deprescribing of anti-depressants – see link below

- [Antidepressant Deprescribing Guidance \(195 downloads\)](#)

3. OptimiseRx decision support system in place. Switches to other formulations are not currently recommended

4. No

Sunderland

1. No

2. This information is exempt from disclosure in accordance with section 21 of the Act as it is available by reasonable alternative means. All guidelines are freely and widely available via: <https://sunderlandccg.nhs.uk/about-us/prescribing/pharmacy-guidelines/>

3. Information not held by the ICB

4. This information is exempt from disclosure in accordance with section 21 of the Act as it is available by reasonable alternative means. All guidelines are freely and widely available via: <https://sunderlandccg.nhs.uk/about-us/prescribing/pharmacy-guidelines/>

Tees Valley.

1. No

2. Yes – This information is exempt from disclosure in accordance with section 21 of the Act as it is available by reasonable alternative means. This information is publicly available here: <https://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/download/tewv-medicines-optimisation-interactive-guide/?tmstv=1668073435>

3. Yes – optimise Rx

4. Yes – only if appropriate for that patient/formulation

In line with the Information Commissioner's directive on the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 your request will form part of our disclosure log. Therefore, a version of our response which will protect your anonymity will be posted on the NHS ICB website <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/>.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss the information supplied, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above telephone number or at the above address.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you should write to the Senior Governance Manager using the contact details at the top of this letter quoting the appropriate reference number.

If you are not content with the outcome your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by The North of England Commissioning Support Unit.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire

SK9 5AF

www.ico.gov.uk

Any information we provide following your request under the Freedom of Information Act will not confer an automatic right for you to re-use that information, for example to publish it. If you wish to re-use the information that we provide and you do not specify this in your initial application for information then you must make a further request for its re-use as per the Re-Use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 www.legislation.gov.uk . This will not affect your initial information request.

Yours sincerely

Paul Atkinson

Paul Atkinson
Information Governance Officer