

Area Prescribing Group report

Date: Friday 04 April 2025 **Quorate:** Yes

The items in this report are supported by the area prescribing group (APG) and approval by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB) is detailed below.

All document links provided for any CMAPG recommendations, can be found via the [legacy Pan Mersey formulary](#). The [legacy Cheshire formulary](#) will also be updated to reflect these changes.

Please note that the legacy Pan Mersey APC website is now closed. All legacy Pan Mersey APC documents are available by using the search function of the [legacy Pan Mersey formulary](#) until harmonisation concludes.

CMAPG governance documents are hosted on the [Prescribing](#) section of the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside website.

New medicines other

Proposal	Notes	Approval
Sarilumab injection for polymyalgia rheumatica RAG designation: Grey APG subgroup: 14 Mar 2025 APG: 04 Apr 2025	For noting. A grey RAG designation has been assigned pending application for use.	ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, noted by MOP group.
Eszopiclone tablets for insomnia RAG designation: Grey APG subgroup: 14 Mar 2025 APG: 04 Apr 2025	For noting. A grey RAG designation has been assigned pending application for use.	ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, noted by MOP group.

Formulary and guidelines

Proposal	Notes	Approval
<p>Mirena® 20 micrograms/24 hours intrauterine delivery system (levonorgestrel) for contraception – license amendment</p> <p>RAG designation: Green</p> <p>APG subgroup: 18 Mar 2025</p> <p>APG: 04 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Update formulary with license change to extend its use for contraception to 8 years (from 5 years previously). Cost savings from reduced administration frequency.</p>	<p>ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, approved by MOP group.</p>
<p>Diazoxide 50mg tablets for intractable hypoglycaemia – licensed product</p> <p>RAG designation: Amber retained</p> <p>APG subgroup: 18 Mar 2025</p> <p>APG: 04 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Update legacy Merseyside formulary by replacement of unlicensed tablets with licensed product. Also, add this to legacy Cheshire formulary. Current cost is consistent with use of licensed product already. No significant cost impact.</p>	<p>ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, approved by MOP group.</p>
<p>Aripiprazole prolonged release for injection 720mg, 960mg (56-day depot) for schizophrenia in adult patients stabilised with aripiprazole – addition to formulary</p> <p>RAG designation: Red</p> <p>APG subgroup: 18 Mar 2025</p> <p>APG: 04 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Addition to formulary. Cost is 20% less compared to monthly formulation, reduced clinic time and patient discomfort.</p>	<p>ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, approved by MOP group.</p>
<p>Rivastigmine – formulary clarification regarding daily and twice weekly administered patches.</p>	<p>Addition of wording to formulary entry for rivastigmine 4.6mg/24 hours and 9.5mg/24 hours patches: Daily application transdermal patches which are available in strengths of 4.6 mg/24 hours, 9.5 mg/24 hours, and 13.3 mg/24 hours should not be confused with Zeyzel®</p>	<p>ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, approved by MOP group.</p>

Proposal	Notes	Approval
<p>RAG designation: Amber recommended (Purple – Sefton Place).</p> <p>APG subgroup: 18 Mar 2025</p> <p>APG: 04 Apr 2025</p>	<p>twice weekly application transdermal patches that are available in strengths of 4.6 mg/24 hours and 9.5 mg/24 hours.</p>	
<p>Addition to formulary of Carobel thickener – for children aged under 3 years and Thick & Easy Clear</p> <p>RAG designation: Amber recommended.</p> <p>APG subgroup: 18 Mar 2025</p> <p>APG: 04 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Additional brands - <i>Carobel</i>, only licensed formulation in patients <3 years, <i>Thick & Easy Clear</i>, "clear" formulation of <i>Thick & Easy</i> already on formulary.</p> <p>Comparable cost to existing formulations in formulary.</p>	<p>ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, approved by MOP group.</p>
<p>Flecainide oral solution 25mg/5mL for cardiac arrhythmias – licensed product</p> <p>RAG designation: Amber initiated.</p> <p>APG subgroup: 18 Mar 2025</p> <p>APG: 04 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Addition of recently licenced flecainide 25mg/5ml suspension (Colonis Pharma Ltd) to the formulary. This will be in place of the currently listed unlicensed special flecainide 25mg/5mL liquid. MHRA guidance states that once there is a licensed product freely available on the market the specials manufacturer must stop supply unless there is a valid clinical reason to maintain supply.</p> <p>Cost per 300ml bottle is £375 compared to £43.20 for unlicensed special. Additional cost in Cheshire & Merseyside is estimated to be £74,000 annually.</p>	<p>ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, clinically supported by MOP group.</p> <p>ICS Chief Pharmacist: 22 April 2025, approved by ICS Chief Pharmacist</p>

Interface prescribing

Proposal	Notes	Approval
<p>Atypical antipsychotics –withdrawal of template letters</p> <p>RAG designation: N/A</p> <p>APG subgroup: 11 Mar 2025</p> <p>APG: 04 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Withdrawal of legacy Merseyside atypical antipsychotic template GP communication letters in favour of the clinic letter. The template GP communication letters have been causing issues in Merseyside due to similarities with shared care format.</p>	<p>ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, approved by MOP group.</p>
<p>Shared care framework expiry extension</p> <p>RAG designation: N/A</p> <p>APG subgroup: 11 Mar 2025</p> <p>APG: 04 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Agreement to extend legacy shared care framework expiry dates by one year, in similar manner to national recommendations for PGD expiry dates. A high-level review of expired or expiring shared care frameworks will need to be undertaken to ensure that working within the current shared care framework does not pose a risk to patients or clinicians.</p>	<p>ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, approved by MOP group.</p>
<p>Definitions and Criteria for Categorisation of Medicines in the Cheshire and Merseyside Formulary</p> <p>RAG designation: N/A</p> <p>APG subgroup: 11 Mar 2025</p> <p>APG: 04 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Minor amendment to the amber retained RAG definition, as requested by the valproate prescribing task and finish group, to better reflect the reality of a pregnancy prevention programme and provide assurance to clinicians in general practice.</p>	<p>ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, approved by MOP group.</p>

Antimicrobials

Proposal	Notes	Approval
<p>Recurrent urinary tract infection in adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Guidance – Treatment recommendation <p>RAG designation: N/A</p> <p>APG subgroup: 12 Feb 2025</p> <p>APG: 04 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Updated guidance to reflect NICE and the introduction of methenamine as a non-antibiotic option.</p> <p>Guidance supports antibiotic stewardship, improves outcomes for patients, and addresses historical variation in use of methenamine hippurate in different geographical parts of the ICS.</p>	<p>ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, approved by MOP group.</p>

Other

Proposal	Notes	Approval
<p>DOACS in AF - updated ICB/Cardiac Network documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NHS Cheshire and Mersey Position Statement: Use of Direct-Acting Oral Anticoagulants in Atrial Fibrillation - Initiating a DOAC in Patients with Atrial Fibrillation / Flutter - Frequently Asked Questions - Medicines Optimisation of DOACs for Atrial Fibrillation <p>RAG designation: N/A</p> <p>Cardiac network: February 2025</p> <p>APG: 04 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Update of existing documents to bring them in line with the National recommendation that generic apixaban and rivaroxaban are now the first-line DOACs of choice for use in AF.</p> <p>There is no recommendation to further switch patients who have already been switched to edoxaban as part of the previous DOAC switch programme. A local edoxaban rebate is expected to remain in place until generic edoxaban becomes available, anticipated April 2026. Apixaban or rivaroxaban should be used first-line for new patients.</p> <p>Updated recommended frequency of monitoring: 4 monthly in patients ≥75 years (especially if on dabigatran) or frail, in line with updated NICE CKS and European guidance.</p>	<p>ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, approved by MOP group.</p>

APG reports

Title	Notes	Approval
NICE TA adherence checklist February 2025	For noting.	ICB Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy (MOP) Group: 17 April 2025, noted by MOP group.