Community Pharmacy BLMK & Northants

Fortnightly Newsletter – w/c 3 March 2025

For Action

Local News:

- Broadcast Group mobile number required from contractors.
- Information on **Methotrexate**.
- Valproate patient leaflets available to download.

Training:

- Register for Hypertension conference - **2/4/25 6:30 – 9:00pm**.
- Data Security Toolkit Workshop – available to watch.

Reminders:

- Pharmacy Pressures Survey – **Deadline extender 10/3/25**.

Local News

URGENT UPDATE – BLMK-N LPC Communications are changing.
The **Community Pharmacy BLMK & Northamptonshire** newsletter will now be published **fortnightly** instead of weekly.

We have recently launched a **WhatsApp Broadcast Group** (to exist alongside your existing groups) to share urgent local updates between newsletters. Unlike regular WhatsApp groups, this will be a **one-way communication channel**, where only the LPC can send messages.
📢 **To join the WhatsApp Broadcast Group:**
Email your **mobile number, pharmacy name, and role** to office@blmk-n-communitypharmacy.org.uk and ensure your privacy settings allow us to add you.

Looking after yourself this Ramadan.
The holy month of Ramadan is expected begin in the evening of Friday 28 February, and end in the evening of Sunday 30 March (depending on the sighting of the moon). Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and a time when many Muslims across the world fast during daylight hours for 29 to 30 days.
The fasting period may last up to 15 hours on some days, making it all the more important for people to look after their health and spirituality when fasting.
Information to help your patients stay well this Ramadan.

Fiona Garnett, Associate Director Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation BLMK ICB, wishes to highlight the following: **Methotrexate once weekly for autoimmune diseases: measures to reduce risk of fatal overdose due to inadvertent daily instead of weekly dosing.**

- remind the patient of the once-weekly dosing and write the day of the week for intake in full in the space provided on the outer packaging and the dispensing label
- only one strength of methotrexate tablet (2.5 mg) should be prescribed and dispensed
- no more than three months' supply of methotrexate should be dispensed.
- demonstrate the Patient Card included with the methotrexate packet and encourage patients to:
    - write the day of the week for intake on the patient card
    - carry it with them to alert any healthcare professionals they consult who are not familiar with their methotrexate treatment about their dosing schedule (for example, on hospital admission, change of care)
- inform the patient and their caregivers of the potentially fatal risk of accidental overdose if methotrexate is taken more frequently than once a week; specifically, that it should not be taken daily
- advise the patient or their carer of the need to
    - promptly seek medical advice if they think they have taken too much.
    - report immediately the onset of any feature of blood disorders (e.g. sore throat, bruising, and mouth ulcers), liver toxicity (e.g. nausea, vomiting, abdominal discomfort, and dark urine), and respiratory effects (e.g. shortness of breath).

Valproate leaflets available to download.
The Southeast Regional Clinical Quality Improvement team have worked with clinicians and people using health services and have developed an information leaflet to support person-centred, informed discussions about how to take valproate as safely as possible. The leaflet has been translated into 30 languages. We encourage you to share these resources widely across your networks.

Training & Events

NHSBSA Online Webinars for Pharmacy Teams.
The NHSBSA are hosting webinars to provide an insight into how they reimburse prescriptions. These sessions will take place online and last approximately 1 hour. There are 8 sessions in total, the next one will be on **Thursday 13 March at 10:00** To sign up and attend the session, email NHSBSA at **open-days@nhsbsa.nhs.uk**.

FAO Northants - Midlands Region Back to Basics - NHS App refresher training session!
These sessions are for primary care practice staff and supporting teams, to enhance knowledge, confidence, and share top tips for the NHS App.
20 March 12:30 – 2pm on Microsoft Teams, **Registration Link**.

FAO BLMK – Addressing Hypertension and Cardiovascular Disease in BLMK.
A Fantastic conference which will bring together community pharmacists, dentists, optometrists, and general practice colleagues.
Wednesday 2 April 2025, 6:30 – 9pm, Mitchell Hall, College Road, Cranfield, Beds, MK43 OAL.
Register attendance here.

Data Security and Protection Toolkit 2025 workshop now on-demand.
Pharmacy owners can now watch a recording of Community Pharmacy England's recent online workshop to help with the completion of the **Data Security and Protection Toolkit for 2025**.
Pharmacy owners required to finalise their pharmacy's Data Security and Protection Toolkit submission by **30 June 2025.**

Reminders

Pressures Survey extended: Every response matters.
Community Pharmacy England has extended its deadline for its annual Pressures Survey, and all pharmacy owners and staff are asked to share their views.

The survey provides crucial evidence as part of ongoing work to monitor and quantify the intolerable challenges facing the sector. The survey is split into two parts for **pharmacy business owners/head office representatives** and another for **pharmacy teams**.
Both surveys are short and should take around 10-15 minutes to complete. They will remain open until **Monday 10 March 2025.**

Reminder: changes to the Pharmacy First monthly threshold.
The Minimum number of clinical pathway consultations for the Pharmacy First Service for **March** will **increase** to **30**.

Useful Links:
https://cpe.org.uk
Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs)
Alerts recalls and safety information: medicines and medical devices.
Drug Safety Updates.