

27th March 2019

Dear GP Colleagues

Urgent Communication - Change to Local Arrangements for Freestyle Libre (FSL) Flash Glucose Monitoring

Background

A pathway for use of Freestyle Libre (FSL) across the STP has been in place since April 2018; hospital teams already involved in the care of people with Type 1 diabetes are initiating patients who meet the agreed criteria and then prescribing & subsequently reviewing FSL use for effectiveness.

This is changing from 1st April 2019 to fall in line with national arrangements. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/flash-glucose-monitoring-national-arrangements-forfunding-of-relevant-diabetes-patients/>. Local Formulary Committees have agreed the change in traffic light status of FSL from red to amber (specialist recommendation) from April 1st. There will be some central funding made available for FSL but payments to CCGs will only be based on FP10 prescribing hence the change.

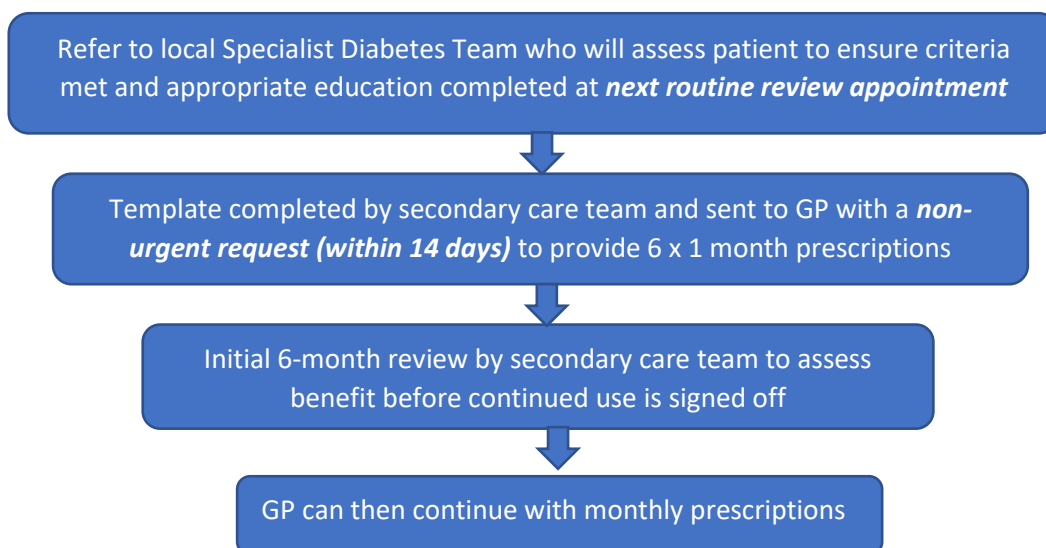
Key points:

- FSL should not be initiated by GPs in primary care. It is specialist initiation only to ensure that patients fit the NHSE criteria and receive training in order to achieve the best outcomes from the use of FSL.
- Funding has been approved for up to 20% of people with Type 1 diabetes. It is likely that the group eligible for meeting the criteria will be greater than 20% so this remains a financial risk for us. Please follow the agreed process to help manage this.
- NHS prescription of FSL is only available for;
 - People with Type 1 Diabetes as per the NHSE criteria on the link above
 - People with Type 1 **or** 2 diabetes on haemodialysis and on insulin treatment
 - Diabetes associated with cystic fibrosis on insulin treatment
- Patient's need to have engaged with the specialist team, undergone specific FSL training and attended a structured education programme
- It is important for the specialist team to assess patients for suitability for NHS prescription **and review benefits at the 6-month review.** Please ensure an appropriate mechanism is in place to manage prescription issues in accordance with this. Setting up one 6 x monthly batch prescriptions may be useful
- Sensors need changing after 14 days therefore 2 sensor kits are prescribable/month. This costs £70/month. One-month prescriptions helps to reduce wastage and avoid an expensive item fee at point of dispensing
- We would expect patients to be considered for FSL in their **next routine appointment. Patients should not be referred to a specialist just to access FSL on the NHS.**

- The sensor does not measure blood glucose levels. Instead, it measures interstitial fluid. Glucose levels in the interstitial fluid can lag-behind glucose levels in the blood by up to 5 minutes. This lag time is longest if blood glucose level is changing rapidly, e.g. after eating or exercising. For this reason, **blood** glucose checks will still be required. We might expect use of self-monitoring of blood glucose strips to reduce slightly but we do not yet have the evidence to support this. Test strips will still need to be prescribed.
- [DVLA advice](#) has been recently updated to reflect use of FSL. Group 1 drivers may now use finger prick glucose testing and continuous glucose monitoring systems (real time glucose monitoring system (RT-CGM) or flash glucose monitoring system (FGM)) for the purposes of driving. However, as there are times when FGM and RT-CGM users are required to check their finger prick glucose, users of these systems must also have finger prick glucose monitors and test strips available when driving
- The CCGs will continue to monitor patient numbers

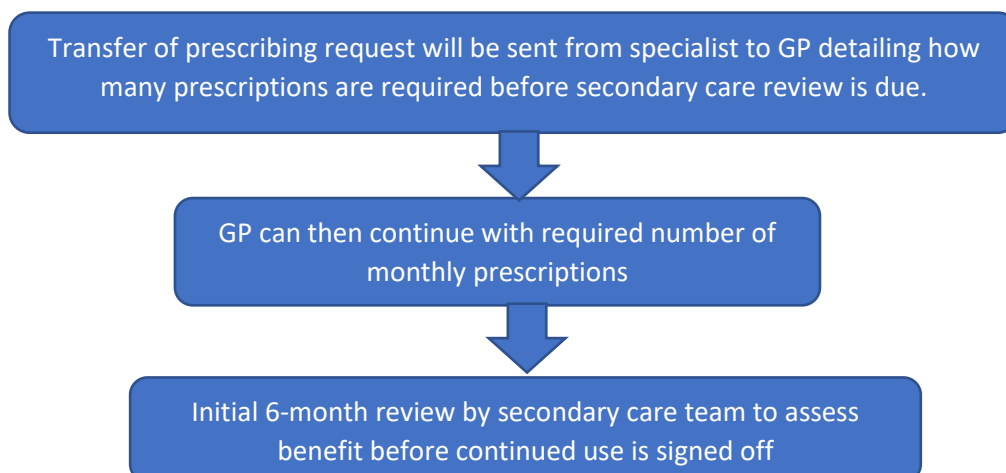
Pathways across the STP from April 1st 2019:

1) New Type 1 Diabetic patients



2) Existing Patients (Type 1 Diabetics)

We are aware of 80 patients across Swindon, 143 across Wiltshire and 38 across BaNES (adults and children).

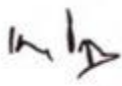


3) Self-Funding patients (Type 1 Diabetics)

Refer to local Specialist Diabetes Team who will assess patient to ensure criteria met and appropriate education completed at *next routine review appointment*

Additional general information on Freestyle Libre is in appendix 1. Please contact your CCG Medicines Optimisation Team if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



Ian Orpen
Clinical Chair
NHS Bath and North
East Somerset Clinical
Commissioning Group



Sarah Bruen
Clinical Chair
NHS Swindon Clinical
Commissioning Group



Richard Sandford-Hill
Clinical Chair
NHS Wiltshire Clinical
Commissioning Group

Contact information:

NHS BaNES CCG medicines management: bsccg.prescribingbanes@nhs.net

NHS Swindon CCG medicines management: SWICCG.medsop@nhs.net

NHS Wiltshire CCG medicines management e-mail enquiries: prescribingwiltshire@nhs.net

Medicines Management website:- <https://prescribing.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk/>

NHS Wiltshire CCG switchboard: 01380 728899

Further information for practices about Freestyle Libre®

What is FreeStyle Libre®?

The FreeStyle Libre® flash glucose monitoring system is a device for the self-monitoring of glucose levels. Unlike traditional finger-prick devices (that measure the glucose level in the blood), Libre® measures the glucose level in the interstitial fluid, via a sensor that sits just under the skin. It can provide a near-continuous record, which is produced by the patient scanning the sensor with their reader-device, as and when required. Additional education and training is necessary for any healthcare professionals or patients who wish to use this system. Further information and videos can be found on the Abbott website at: <https://www.freestylelibre.co.uk/libre/help/tutorials.html>

What's on prescription?

The reader device is either purchased via online orders or may be provided via Abbott representatives direct to clinics – it is not available on FP10s. These devices are for long-term use and have associated warranties. Patients can choose to use the reader device OR use the app if their smartphone supports it. The sensors last up to 14 days and can be ordered by prescription on the NHS if the patient is eligible as per the NHSE criteria. The PIP code for the FreeStyle Libre® sensor is 405-9028 – the pack contains a sensor, a sensor applicator and a wipe.

Safe disposal

Once used, the sensor needs to be disposed of appropriately in a sharps bin. The applicator and pack should go in a biohazard pack and the pack can go in general waste. Therefore, the patient may require access to sharps bins and biohazard bags, which they may order through the pharmacy. Patients may also wish to purchase additional items used to aid with sensor adhesion.

How to dispose of system components after use?

Puck/Sensor: Sharps bin
Applicator with cap on: Biohazard bag
Sensor packaging: General waste

Skin reactions and adhesion

Advice on sensor adhesion is provided here: <https://www.freestylelibre.co.uk/libre/discover/applying-your-sensor.html>

Please be aware of the MHRA safety alert regarding FSL sensors that was published 29th January 2019 about skin reactions to the adhesive: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/alert-to-users-of-freestyle-libre-flash-glucose-monitoring-system-regarding-skin-reactions-to-sensor-adhesive>

How to order the sensors

Pharmacies can order sensors through the following link: <https://www.freestylelibrepharmacyportal.co.uk/>

Upon the patients first visit, independents/dispensing practices will require registration; those in the large chains should be pre-registered and should have received login details from their respective head offices. Delivery is next day for orders placed before 5pm.

What if there is a problem with the sensor?

The company should be contacted directly by the patient and not the pharmacy, specialist centre or GP practice. The patient should contact the Abbott Customer Careline on 0800 170 1177 on the day that a problem with the FreeStyle Libre® system is identified, such as the sensor falling off. The patient should keep the displaced/faulty FreeStyle Libre® sensor and follow the instructions of the Abbott Customer Careline representative. Please note that a maximum of 3 replacement FreeStyle Libre® sensors can be issued per individual for those that fall off.

Further information from Abbott about the supply process can be found via the PSNC website [here](https://psnc.org.uk/sunderland-lpc/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2018/01/FSL-Reimbursement-FAQs-171017-Wholesaler-Pharmacy-FINAL.pdf) (2017): <https://psnc.org.uk/sunderland-lpc/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2018/01/FSL-Reimbursement-FAQs-171017-Wholesaler-Pharmacy-FINAL.pdf>

Further training for HCPs is available at <https://abcd.care/node/778>