

Our Ref: SR/AD/HP/NH

2nd February 2024

FAO GPs and PMs
Black Country

Dear All

Reference: National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) Alert Valproate

You may be aware of the following NPSA alert for Valproate:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6565ddf162180b0012ce82fd/NatPSA-2023-013-MHRA.pdf>

The majority of prescribing does occur in primary care, however Valproate for indications as per alert are seldomly commenced by a prescriber in General Practice given it is a specialist medicine. To that end, the Black Country Integrated Care System (ICS) is on track to deliver against this NPSA alert by deadline, however actions to ensure compliance with this operationally will be delivered over the next 6 months.

It has come to our attention that GP practices are referring into or seeking advice and guidance from the relevant clinical speciality (secondary care) for Valproate prescribing, specifically for completion of the annual risk acknowledgement form in females of childbearing potential.

We are also aware that CQC on visiting practices may seek assurance around this and other NPSA alerts and so for your information, the ICB Medicines Optimisation team through the Medicines Safety Network are currently co-ordinating a system plan in response to this alert working with our secondary care colleagues and clinical teams from the Trusts in the Black Country to support implementation within the next 6 months. We expect this will satisfy the requirement for CQC assurance regards this alert, however we await confirmation (from CQC) of this and will update once known.

Plans are being developed to repatriate those females of childbearing potential back into the relevant clinical speciality and this work will be co-ordinated with secondary care colleagues. The primary care ICB commissioned medicines optimisation (pharmacy) teams will lead and support primary care to do this, ensuring actions of this alert are manageable within our system and co-ordinated. This work will begin within the next 2 months and our expectation is all eligible females (PREVENT) will be reviewed by the specialist aligned to the Valproate license within this calendar year.

Additionally, a shared care approach is being developed to ensure future reviews occur via the specialist annually as a rule.

Please can we advise that Primary Care GP/Non-medical prescribing teams do not refer or seek advice and guidance for females eligible under PREVENT programme aligned to this alert at this time. As above, this work is being led and co-ordinated via the primary care medicines optimisation team. Finally, a reminder as per the alert, valproate should continue to be prescribed as normal in primary care, however as part of medication



review/repeat prescribing, females of childbearing potential should **always be counselled on the use of highly effective contraception** and signposted (if appropriate) to your local contraception and sexual health service for this.

To ensure a co-ordinated and seamless programme of work to meet the NPSA regulations and to avoid duplication, we wanted to communicate to General Practices across the Black Country to ensure our specialists in hospital settings can cope with management of these reviews accordingly.

However, please note clinical teams should continue to exercise their own clinical judgement if there is a need to seek advice & guidance or specialist referral. This communication is not intended to replace this requirement.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Roberts

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