

Medicines Optimisation *Key Messages* – *Bulletin 24*

Needles for Pre-filled and Reusable Pens

KEY MESSAGE: Use cost effective needle choices

- Last year practices in Norfolk & Waveney ICB spent approx. **£371,000** on pen needles for insulin and GLP-1 agonist administration¹
- NHS England **does not recommend** prescribing of insulin pen needles **>£5.00 / 100** for any patient with diabetes².
- The most cost-effective brands cost **<£3.00/100** needles and are therefore preferred **1st choice** for most patients. These currently include **GlucorX Care Point / Ultra, Greenfine, Insupen Original and Microdot Max**³ – see image below.
- For **adults** there is **no clinical reason** for recommending needles **8mm and longer**⁴
- For **children and adolescents** there is also **no clinical reason** for using needles **longer than 6mm**.
 - Needles **4, 5 and 6mm** are suitable for **all people** regardless of BMI;
 - they may not require a lifted skin fold and can be administered at 90 degrees to the skin.
- Using shorter length needles of **(6mm or less)** helps to **prevent inadvertent IM injection** of insulin.
- IM injection of all human insulin should be **avoided** as unpredictable blood glucose levels and **severe hypoglycaemia** can result.
- If leakage of insulin occurs with shorter needles, **injection technique** should be reviewed. The individual should count slowly to 10 seconds before withdrawing the needle. If doses of more than 60 units are to be given, the dose could be split and given at different sites.
- All needles are for **single use only**.

Safe Disposal and Safety Needle Devices

- Ensure patients are educated about the **safe disposal of needles via a sharps bin**.
- **Sharps bins** can be prescribed on FP10. Sharpsguard or Sharpsafe yellow 1 litre are suitable.
- Most patients will have to [contact their district council](#) to arrange home collection of full sealed Sharps bins. A small number of [participating community pharmacies](#) may also take bins for safe disposal. Patients should place their bins into the pharmacy's larger bins themselves.
- **Safety needles:** e.g. Apollo, BD AutoShield, Dropsafe, GlucorX Safety/Dual Safety, NovoFine Autocover, Microdot Safety/Dual Safety, Neon Verifine Safety and Unifine SafeControl are **TAG BLACK / Not Commissioned**. They **should NOT be prescribed on FP10** as they are expensive and are for the benefit of the person administering the insulin, rather than the patient. Practices spent **£18,000** last year on **safety needles**. GPs who are asked to prescribe these needles should contact their Prescribing Advisor for advice, unless for the following **exceptional use**:
 - For patients whose insulin is administered by a non-professional healthcare worker, e.g. carer, **AND** who is known to have a blood-borne virus e.g. HIV, hepatitis, **OR** who is known to be aggressive. See also [TAG Guidance](#).

References:

1. ePACT2 prescribing data NHS BSA <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/epact2>
2. Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs Version 2, June 2019 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/items-which-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed-in-primary-care-v2.1.pdf>
3. The Electronic Drug Tariff <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/drug-tariff>
4. The First UK Injection Technique Recommendations 2nd edition. The Forum for Injection Technique (FIT) October 2011

Needles for Pre-filled and Reusable Pen Injectors

		1st choice	Cost ≤ £3.00 per 100 and preferred size
		2nd choice	Cost £3.01 to £5.00 per 100 and preferred size
Appliance (Manufacturer/Supplier)	Size/Gauge	Listed by Cost per 100 (£)	Compatibility with insulin pen devices
Insupen Original (Spirit Healthcare Ltd)	4mm/32 gauge	£2.49	Compatible with all standard pens https://www.spirit-health.co.uk/medicines-optimisation/products-for-diabetics/insupen
	5mm/31 gauge	£2.49	
	6mm/31 gauge	£2.49	
	6mm/32 gauge	£2.49	
Microdot Max (Cambridge Sensors Ltd)	4mm/32 gauge	£2.74	Compatible with all insulin pens https://microdot.biz/pen-needles/
	6mm/31 gauge	£2.74	
GlucoRx CarePoint (GlucoRx Ltd)	4mm/31 gauge	£2.75	Universal fit on all insulin pen brands https://www.glucoRx.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/00044CL_Pen-Needle- https://www.glucoRx.co.uk/our-products/glucoRx-insulin-pen-needles/
	5mm/31 gauge	£2.75	
	6mm/31 gauge	£2.75	
GlucoRx CarePoint Ultra	4mm/32 gauge	£2.75	
GreenFin e (formerly CareFine) (Neon Diagnostics Ltd)	4mm/32 gauge	£2.75	Universal fit and compatible with all leading brands https://www.neondiagnosics.co.uk/pen-needles/carefine
	5mm/31 gauge	£2.75	
	6mm/31 gauge	£2.75	
Klinion Soft Fine Plus Pen Needles (Klinion)	4mm/32 gauge	£3.49	Suitable for use with most pen injectors https://klinion.com/en/diabetes-care/pen-needles
	5mm/31 gauge	£3.49	
	5mm/32 gauge	£3.49	
	6mm/31 gauge	£3.49	
	6mm/32 gauge	£3.49	
BD Viva (Pack of 90) (BD / embecta)	4mm/32 gauge	£3.59	Equivalent to £3.99 per 100 needles Compatible with all widely used pen injection devices https://www.embecta.com/gb/en-gb/products-and-solutions/products/product-families/bd-viva-pen-needle
	5mm/31 gauge	£3.59	
	6mm/31 gauge	£3.59	
Mylife Penfine Classic (Mylife)	4mm/32 gauge	£3.61	Compatible with all major brands of injection pens https://www.mylife-diabetescare.com/en-GB/products/pen-needles/mylife-penfine-classic.html
	5mm/31 gauge	£3.61	
	6mm/32 gauge	£3.61	
PROFine (Prosum Medical)	4mm/32 gauge	£3.80	Universal fitting compatible with all insulin pen injectors compliant with ISO 11608-2. https://www.prosummedical.co.uk/insulin-delivery
	5mm/31 gauge	£3.80	
	6mm/31 gauge	£3.80	
4SURE (Nipro-Diagnostics)	4mm/31 gauge	£3.95	Compatible with all major brands of injection pens. https://www.nipro-diagnostics.co.uk/patients/4sure-products/4sure-pen-needles
	4mm/32 gauge	£3.95	
	5mm/31 gauge	£3.95	
	5mm/32 gauge	£3.95	
	6mm/31 gauge	£3.95	
	6mm/32 gauge	£3.95	
TriCare (Owen Mumford)	4mm/32 gauge	£4.05	Compatible with all major brands of injection pens https://www.owenmumford.com/en/medical-devices/tricare
	5mm/31 gauge	£4.05	
	6mm/31 gauge	£4.05	
Omnican Fine (B. Braun Medical Ltd)	4mm/32 gauge	£4.10	https://www.bbraun.co.uk/en/products/b/omnican-pen-needles.html
	5mm/32 gauge	£4.10	
	6mm/32 gauge	£4.10	
GlucoRx Finepoint (GlucoRx Ltd)	4mm/31 gauge	£4.50	Universal fit on all insulin pen delivery devices. https://www.glucoRx.co.uk/our-products/glucoRx-insulin-pen-needles/
	5mm/31 gauge	£4.50	
	6mm/31 gauge	£4.50	
GlucoRx Finepoint Ultra	4mm/32 gauge	£4.50	
Neon Verifine (Neon Diagnostics Ltd)	4mm/31 gauge	£4.50	Universal fit and compatible with all leading brands https://www.neondiagnosics.co.uk/pen-needles/verifine
	5mm/31 gauge	£4.50	
	6mm/31 gauge	£4.50	

Issued: January 2024

Drug Tariff: January 20224

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/drug-tariff>

Review Date: January 2025

*KMB 24 *insert link and above*

Title	KEY MESSAGES Bulletin - Needles for Pre-filled and Reusable Pen Injectors
Description of policy	<i>To inform healthcare professionals</i>
Scope	<i>Prescribing information relating to the prescribing of Needles for Pre-filled and Reusable Pen Injectors</i>
Originally prepared by	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team (LS) & Specialist Diabetes Nurse (JW)
Evidence base / Legislation	Level of Evidence: <i>A. based on national research-based evidence and is considered best evidence</i> B. mix of national and local consensus <i>C. based on local good practice and consensus in the absence of national research based information</i>
Dissemination	Is there any reason why any part of this document should not be available on the public web site? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes / No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Approved by	<i>N&W ICB Senior Prescribing & Medicines Management Team</i>
Authorised by	<i>TBC For consideration by N&W Therapeutics Advisory Group (TAG)</i>
Review date and by whom	January 2026 – Medicines Optimisation Team, NHS Norfolk & Waveney ICB
Date of issue	February 2024

Version Control (To be completed by policy owner)

Version	Date	Author	Status	Comment
0.4	18.1.13	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team (LS/MC)& Specialist Diabetes Nurse (JW)	Draft	Emailed to Network group for comments
0.5	1/2/13	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team (LS/MC)& Specialist Diabetes Nurse (JW)	Draft	Cost comparison updated to Feb 13 Drug Tariff. Formatting.
0.6	18.2.13	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team (LS/MC)& Specialist Diabetes Nurse (JW)	Draft	Amended with comments from Prescribing Ref Group. Safe disposal info added and safety needle section re-worded.
0.7	6.3.13	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team (LS/MC)& Specialist Diabetes Nurse (JW)	Draft	Amended with further comments from Network group re: safety needles
0.8	10.4.13	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team (LS/MC)& Specialist Diabetes Nurse (JW)	Draft	Further amended re: safety needles following discussion between Christine Walton and Julie Widdowson. Logo changed.
0.9	15.5.13	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team (LS/MC)& Specialist Diabetes Nurse (JW)	Draft	Statement added regarding leakage of insulin at large doses and appropriate technique.
0.91	12.6.13	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team (LS/MC)& Specialist Diabetes Nurse (JW)	Draft	Ratified by Prescribing Ref Group with minor amendments.
1.0	25.6.13	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team (LS/MC)& Specialist Diabetes Nurse (JW)	FINAL	Ratified by Drug & Therapeutics Commissioning Group 20.6.13
1.1	6.9.13	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	Update	Cost comparison updated Sept 13 Drug Tariff. New product Nanopass added. STM. Ratified by Prescribing Senior Team.
1.2	23.10.13	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	Update	Cost comparison updated Oct 13 Drug Tariff. New product GlucoRx added. Comfort point deleted from bullet 2 as now amber section of cost effective list.

1.3	31.1.14	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	Update	Cost comparison updated Jan 14 Drug Tariff. Microdot 4mm added and omnican price reduction.
1.5.	16/6/14	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	Update	Cost comparison updated June 14 Drug Tariff. Mylife penfine classic added as cost effective choice. New NEL CSU format. Ratified by Senior Prescribing & Medicines Management Team
2.0	19.6.14	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	FINAL	
2.1	6/10/14	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	Update	Cost comparison updated Oct 14 Drug Tariff. Microdot droplet price reduction to £5.95. Post meeting amendment – change 'NHS Norfolk and Waveney' to 'CCGs in Norfolk and Waveney' agreed at Senior team meeting 26/11/14.
2.2	6/1/15	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	Update	Cost comparison update with BD+ Microfine price reduction.
2.3	3/15 23/4/15	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	Update	Cost comparison update March 2015 drug tariff. New needles added Tricare and NeedleBay. GlucoRx fine point ultra added as per April DT
2.4	Nov 15	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	Update	Cost comparison update Nov 2015 drug tariff. New needles added – Glucoject. Spend updated. Spend on safety needles added.
2.5	April 16	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	Update	Cost effective needles added: Haemofine and BD Viva. Needles greater than 6mm in length removed from cost comparison chart with statement added regarding not recommended.
2.6	Dec 16	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	Update	Neon verifine and PROFINE added to cost comparison
2.7	Dec17	Prescribing & Medicines Management Team	Update	Amendment to classification of low cost needles <£5.00/100. Neon verifine safety added to list of safety needles. Update of cost comparison chart. Reference to TAG status of safety needles added.
2.8	May 19	AGEM CSU Medicines Optimisation Team	Update	Cost comparison updated.
2.9	Jan 20	AGEM CSU Medicines Optimisation Team Update	Update	Statement added regarding NHS England recommendation regarding needles <£5.00/100. Cost comparison updated.
3.0	Mar 21	AGEM CSU Medicines Optimisation Team Update (FM)	Update	Annual spends on needles update based on April to Sept 2020 data. Cost comparison table updated in line with DT Mar 2021 Hyperlinks to references updated.
3.1	Jan 22	AGEM CSU Medicines Optimisation Team Update (FM)	Update	Annual spends on needles update based on April to Oct 2021 data. Cost comparison table updated re DT Jan22 IME-FINE removed
3.2	August 23	NWICB Medicines Optimisation Team Update (NC)	Update	Annual spend on needles update based on Jan 22 to Dec 2022 data. Cost comparison table updated re DT July 23
4.0	January 2024	NWICB Medicines Optimisation Team Update (FM)	Update	Annual spend on needle update based on Oct 2022 to Sep 2023 ePACT data. Cost comparison table updated re DT Jan24 – list restricted to cost-effective 1 st & 2 nd choices. Supported by TAG