NHS
Suffolk and
North East Essex

Position Statement on the Primary Care Prescribing of

LIDOCAINE PLASTERS

With effect from November 2025

The Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB) does **not** support the routine prescribing of lidocaine plasters in primary care settings.

Prescribing is **only** supported for patients experiencing post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN) This indication carries a **GREEN** traffic light classification when prescribed in accordance with the guidance below.

Prescribing lidocaine plasters for **any** other indication is not supported in primary care settings. These indications carry a **DOUBLE RED** classification, and requests should be returned to the originator.

Background

In August 2023, NHS England published Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: policy guidance[1] as general guidance under s14Z51 of the NHS Act 2006 to reduce unwarranted variation, improve patient outcomes, and provide value for money for the NHS.

Note: ICBs have legal duties to advance equality and have regard to reducing health inequalities.

Lidocaine plasters are categorised as items of 'low clinical effectiveness, where there is a lack of robust evidence of clinical effectiveness or significant safety concerns'[1].

Rationale[1]

Lidocaine plasters are licensed for symptomatic relief of neuropathic pain associated with previous herpes zoster infection (post herpetic neuralgia, PHN) in adults.

NICE guidance on chronic pain does **not** recommend lidocaine plasters for treating neuropathic pain.

Lidocaine plasters are **not** an alternative to an opioid-based medicine when concerned about dependence and withdrawal.

Exceptions to DOUBLE RED traffic light classification

- The recommendations do **not** apply to patients who have been treated in line with NICE guidance on chronic pain NG193 but are still experiencing PHN[2].
- Lidocaine plasters should **only** be prescribed for patients with PHN who are intolerant of first-line therapies or where these therapies have been ineffective[3].
- Prescribing for patients with PHN should be initiated in a secondary care setting and **only** if the decision has been made after a multidisciplinary team (MDT) discussion[2].
- Requests for prescribing at End of Life should be considered on an individual patient basis.

Guidance for clinicians in primary care

- Do **not** initiate prescribing of lidocaine plasters for **any** indication[1].
- Prescribe **only** for patients with PHN, following an MDT request from secondary care[1]. Review after 2-4 weeks and reassess ongoing need on a regular basis (see actions below)[4]
- Prescribe lidocaine plasters **generically** and not by brand name.
- Deprescribe lidocaine plasters in patients prescribed them for **any** other indication (see actions below)

Produced by SNEE Medicines Optimisation Team. Approved Integrated Medicines Optimisation Committee 9th November 2025 Review date November 2027

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Actions

1. New patients

Patients never prescribed lidocaine plasters by their GP.

- Do **not** accept any new requests to prescribe lidocaine plasters, except following an MDT request from secondary care for patients with PHN. Review ongoing need on a regular basis[4].
- For non-PHN indications, decline to prescribe and refer back to the requesting clinician.

2. Existing patients

Patients with lidocaine plasters last issued by the GP practice within the **previous** six months.

- Review **all** patients currently prescribed lidocaine plasters with the intention to deprescribe. Guidance on a review and de-prescribing process is available here.
- Review **all** ongoing prescribing regularly[4] and discontinue treatment if there is no evidence of ongoing effectiveness.

3. Historic patients

Patients with lidocaine plasters last issued by the GP practice **over** six months ago.

- Remove lidocaine plasters from repeat template and archive to avoid accidental issue.
- If a patient requests a prescription for lidocaine plasters, follow 'New patients' guidance above.

Further support

Patients who wish to seek further clarification should be directed to PALS:

- Telephone: 0800 389 6819
- Email: pals@snee.nhs.uk or complaints@snee.nhs.uk
- Website: suffolkandnortheastessex.icb.nhs.uk

References

1. NHS England » Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: policy guidance
2. PrescQipp 350. May 2024. Lidocaine medicated plasters https://www.prescqipp.info/media/3gfd0tiv/350-lidocaine-plasters-2-0.pdf
3. NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries – post-herpetic neuralgia
4. SPC Lidocaine Grunenthal 700 mg medicated plaster https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/2469/smpc
5. Overview | Chronic pain (primary and secondary) in over 16s: assessment of all chronic pain and management of chronic primary pain | Guidance | NICE
6. Recommendations | Neuropathic pain in adults: pharmacological management in non-specialist settings | Guidance | NICE
7. Specialist Pharmacy Service lidocaine plasters evidence review

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