

Hertfordshire and West Essex (HWE) ICB Area Prescribing Committee (APC) recommendations for NEEDLES FOR PRE-FILLED / REUSABLE INSULIN OR GLP-1 RECEPTOR AGONIST PENS

Recommendations for Pen Needles:

- Cost-effective pen needles **cost less than £4 for 100**. Needles costing £4 or more for 100 are not recommended for prescribing. (See appendix 1 overleaf for list of approved brands)
- Patients who are on needles that cost £4 or more for 100 should be switched to a cost-effective brand.
- Local diabetes specialists who have extensive clinical experience in using pen needles recommend the use of **BD Viva®**.
- NHS England guidance¹ approved cost effective brands are pen needles that cost less than £5 per 100.
- The Forum for Injection Technique (FIT) UK considers **the 4mm needle to be the safest pen needle** for adults and children regardless of age, gender, and Body Mass Index (BMI).² Using needles of a shorter length helps to prevent intramuscular (IM) injection. IM injection of insulin should be avoided as it can result in unpredicted blood glucose levels and severe hypoglycaemia.
 - For patients currently using longer pen needle lengths, it is advisable to change to a shorter 4mm needle length.
 - If leakage occurs with shorter needles, injection technique should be reviewed.
- Feedback from local clinicians indicates they do not use 'click and twist' needles (NovoTwist® and Mylife clickfine®). Patients on these products should be reviewed for a switch to a low-cost needle.
- Pen needles come with a universal fit and therefore the listed pen needles are compatible with all major pen devices currently available.
- All needles are for single use only.
- The GLP-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RAs), liraglutide (Victoza®) and tirzepatide (Mounjaro®), are **not** supplied with pen needles. BD Viva® is compatible and is the preferred needle choice for use with Victoza® and Mounjaro® pre-filled pens.

Safe Disposal of Sharps:

- Ensure patients are educated about the safe disposal of needles via a sharps bin.
- Sharps bins and needle clipping devices can be prescribed on FP10.
- Sharpsguard yellow 1 litre/5 litre or Sharpsafe yellow 1 litre are suitable for pen needles.
- Patients are advised to contact their local council to arrange collection:

Place	Council	Telephone No.
East and North Hertfordshire	Stevenage	01438 242242
	Three Rivers	01923 776611
	Uttlesford	01799 510510
	Welwyn Hatfield	01707 357000
	East Hertfordshire	01279 655261
	North Hertfordshire	01462 474000
South West Hertfordshire	St Albans	01727 866100
	Three Rivers	01923 776611
	Watford	01923 226400
	Dacorum	01442 228000
	Hertsmere	020 8207 2277
West Essex	Uttlesford	01799 510510
	Epping Forest	01992 564000
	Harlow	01279 446655

Safety needs:

- Safety needles which incorporate automatic safety locks should be used by all healthcare professionals and by all employees in the healthcare sector when administering insulin/GLP-1 RA to patients.
- Safety needles should **NOT** be prescribed on FP10 for use by healthcare professionals and employees; it is the healthcare employer's* responsibility to provide them.^{1,3}
This includes nursing homes and community providers (e.g. CLCH, HCT or EPUT) delivering healthcare in residential homes or people's own homes.
- The requirement to use a safety needle is based on addressing the risk of sharps injuries. Employers are legally required to assess risks from sharps injuries and put appropriate control measures in place.
- Wherever safety needles are required, adequate training should be provided to the user.

* A healthcare employer is an employer whose primary activity is the management, organisation or provision of healthcare.

References:

1. NHSE: Items which should not be routinely prescribed in primary care: policy guidance October 23. Available from: [NHS England » Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: policy guidance](#)
2. The UK Injection and Infusion Technique Recommendations. FIT UK Forum for Injection Technique UK. 4th Edition. October 2016. Available from: [FIT Recommendations 2020-ENGLISH.pdf \(fit4diabetes.com\)](#)
3. Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013. Guidance for employers and employees <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsis7.pdf>

Appendix 1

Approved Needles for Pre-filled and Reusable Pen Injectors (Prices based on Drug Tariff – May 2024)

Appliance	Size/Gauge	Cost/100
4SURE	4mm/31g,4mm/32g	£3.95
BD Viva*	4mm/32g	£3.99 (Available as a pack of 90 at £3.59)
GreenFine	4mm/32g	£2.75
GlucoRx CarePoint	4mm/31g	£2.75
GlucoRx CarePoint Ultra	4mm/32g	£2.75
Insupen Original	4mm/32g	£2.49
Microdot Max	4mm/32g	£2.74
Mylife Penfine Classic	4mm/32g	£3.61
PROFine	4mm/32g	£3.80

*Locally Preferred choice is BD Viva®

Version	2.0 – Updates include – a) alignment of locally preferred pen needle option (BD Viva®) b) alignment of recommendations for safety needles c) added information for prescribing needles with GLP-1 receptor agonists
Developed by	Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation Team, Hertfordshire and West Essex (HWE) ICB with relevant HWE ICS stakeholders.
Approved by	Hertfordshire & West Essex Area Prescribing Committee
Date approved / updated	September 2024
Review date	This HWE APC recommendation is based upon the evidence available at the time of publication. This recommendation will be reviewed upon request in the light of new evidence becoming available.
Superseded version	Needles for Pre-filled and Reusable Insulin Pen Injectors Guidance – HMMC (March 2021) Blood Glucose & Ketone Meter Guidance (Incl. lancets, insulin pen needles and disposal of sharps) – MOPB (Aug 2021)