

February 2022

Dear Colleague,

South Bucks GP practices had recently raised at the Clinical Interface Committee their desire for some formal guidance to be agreed between Frimley Health and Care ICS and Buckinghamshire ICP in relation to management of patient flows between these two local health care systems. The following guidance has been agreed at both the Bucks ICP Medicines Optimisation Board (Dec 2021) and the Frimley ICS Medicines Optimisation Board (Jan2022):

*“Formularies govern which medications should be routinely available for use within a locality. The drug inclusions in the formulary will have been agreed following careful review of the evidence base supporting the use of individual pharmaceutical agents and their cost effectiveness. As such adherence to prescribing within the formulary promotes safer more efficacious practice that delivers best value for the NHS and for this reason the majority of prescribing should fall within the bounds of the formulary. The NHS is however organised into local systems that deliver decisions deemed to be most appropriate for their local population, whilst most decisions will be consistent across systems there will be some areas of variance and deviation between systems. Given this context where there is flow of patients between systems instead of an arbitrary application of formulary rules along geographic boundaries, a pragmatic approach should be undertaken both by the Medicines Optimisation Team and individual Prescribers which takes into consideration the wider context of the pathways the care is being delivered through and whether adequate advice and support is available to support any particular prescribing decision.*

*It is already recognised that whilst the majority of prescribing should be encompassed by the Buckinghamshire formulary there will be instances where an individualised approach to patient care may necessitate prescribing outside of the Buckinghamshire formulary. When dealing with patient referrals across ICS boundaries a similar approach to patient care may require prescribing outside of the host ICS formulary and in line with the formulary of a neighbouring ICS instead”*

I hope this guidance is useful when managing the care of patients flowing across boundaries between local health systems and provides suitable reassurance when acting in the best interest of your patients.

Kind Regards