

**Atomoxetine **AMBER** shared care protocol for ADULTS**  
 For use between Frimley ICB Primary Care and any Right to Choose (RTC) or Private Provider

Approved by Medicines Optimisation Group	December 2024
Ratified by Medicines Optimisation Board	January 2025
Date of issue:	January 2025
Date of last review:	n/a
Date of planned review	January 2027

**Atomoxetine**

Atomoxetine is indicated for the treatment of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in adults as part of a comprehensive treatment programme. Treatment must be initiated by a specialist in the treatment of ADHD, such as a psychiatrist. Diagnosis should be made according to current DSM criteria or the guidelines in ICD.

In adults, the presence of symptoms of ADHD that were pre-existing in childhood should be confirmed. Third-party corroboration is desirable and atomoxetine should not be initiated when the verification of childhood ADHD symptoms is uncertain. Diagnosis cannot be made solely on the presence of one or more symptoms of ADHD. Based on clinical judgment, patients should have ADHD of at least moderate severity as indicated by at least moderate functional impairment in 2 or more settings (for example, social, academic, and/or occupational functioning), affecting several aspects of an individual's life.

A comprehensive treatment programme typically includes psychological, educational and social measures and is aimed at stabilising patients with a behavioural syndrome characterised by symptoms which may include chronic history of short attention span, distractibility, emotional lability, impulsivity, moderate to severe hyperactivity, minor neurological signs and abnormal EEG. Learning may or may not be impaired.

Pharmacological treatment is not indicated in all patients with this syndrome and the decision to use the medicinal product must be based on a very thorough assessment of the severity of the patient's symptoms and impairment in relation to the patient's age and the persistence of symptoms.

The use of atomoxetine should always be used according to the licensed indication and according to prescribing/ diagnostic guidelines.

## Specialist responsibilities

- Assess the patient and provide diagnosis; ensure that this diagnosis is within scope of this shared care protocol (section 2) and communicated to primary care.
- Use a shared decision making approach; discuss the benefits and risks of the treatment with the patient and provide the appropriate counselling (see section 11) to enable the patient to reach an informed decision. Obtain and document patient consent. Provide an appropriate patient information leaflet.
- Ensure the patient and/or their carer understands that treatment may be stopped if they do not attend for monitoring and treatment review
- Assess for contraindications and cautions (see section 4) and interactions (see section 7).
- Conduct required baseline investigations and initial monitoring (see section 8).
- Initiate and optimise treatment as outlined in section 5.
- Transfer to primary care is normally after the patient has been treated at the maintenance dose for 2 months and with satisfactory investigation results for at least 4 weeks. Prescribe sufficient medication (one month's supply) to enable transfer to primary care, including where there are unforeseen delays to transfer of care. Check product details for pack sizes as most products manufactured in boxes of 28 dose units.
- Once treatment is optimised, complete the shared care documentation and send a request to prescribe to patient's GP practice detailing the diagnosis, current and ongoing dose, baseline and most recent test results, confirm the monitoring schedule and when the next monitoring is required. Include contact information (section 13).
- Conduct the scheduled reviews and required monitoring in section 8 and communicate the results to primary care. After each review, advise primary care whether treatment should be continued, confirm the ongoing dose, and whether the ongoing monitoring outlined in section 9 remains appropriate.
- Reassume prescribing responsibilities if the patient becomes or wishes to become pregnant.
- If the patient develops a concurrent mental health or neurodevelopmental condition requiring specialist care where their ADHD is best managed by the specialist service, reassume prescribing responsibilities, or inform the patient's GP that a referral to an alternative provider is required in order to properly support the patient.
- Provide advice to primary care on the management of adverse effects if required.
- Advise primary care if treatment should be discontinued. Trial discontinuations can be supported by the specialist.

## Primary care responsibilities

- Respond to the request from the specialist for shared care in writing. It is asked that this be undertaken within 14 days of the request being made, where possible.
- If accepted, prescribe ongoing treatment as detailed in the specialists request and as per section 5 taking into any account potential drug interactions in section 7.
- Adjust the dose of atomoxetine prescribed as advised by the specialist.
- Conduct the required monitoring as outlined in section 9.
- Assess for possible interactions with atomoxetine when starting new medicines (section 7).
- Manage any adverse effects as detailed in section 10 and discuss with specialist team when required.
- Stop atomoxetine and make an urgent referral to the specialist if cerebral ischaemia, new or worsening seizures, or serotonin syndrome are suspected.
- Discuss other adverse effects with the specialist team as clinically appropriate (section 10).
- Refer the management back to the specialist if the patient becomes or plans to become pregnant.
- Stop treatment as advised by the specialist. Trial discontinuations should be managed by the specialist.

## Patient and/or carer responsibilities

- Not to drive, use other modes of transport that require a high level of alertness e.g. bicycle, scooter, operate machines or undertake skilled tasks if atomoxetine affects their ability to do so safely, e.g. by causing dizziness, drowsiness, or visual disturbances

- Take atomoxetine as prescribed and do not stop taking it without speaking to their primary care prescriber or specialist.
- Patients, their family or carer should store atomoxetine safely and securely. It must not be shared with anyone else.
- Tell anyone who prescribes them a medicine that they are taking atomoxetine.
- Attend regularly for monitoring and review appointments with primary care and specialist. Be aware that medicines may be stopped if they do not attend appointments.
- Report adverse effects to their primary care prescriber. Seek immediate medical attention if they develop any symptoms as detailed in section 11.
- Report the use of any over the counter medications to their GP and be aware they should discuss the use of atomoxetine with their pharmacist before purchasing any OTC medicines.
- People of child-bearing potential should inform the specialist or GP immediately if they suspect they may be pregnant, or are planning a pregnancy

## 1. Background

Atomoxetine is a sympathomimetic drug indicated for the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It is an alternative treatment option in patients who cannot tolerate lisdexamfetamine or methylphenidate, or whose symptoms have not responded to separate 6-week trials of lisdexamfetamine or methylphenidate (see NICE Guidance NG87 Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management). NICE recommends that people with ADHD have a comprehensive, holistic shared treatment plan that addresses psychological, behavioural and occupational or educational needs.

Atomoxetine is licensed for use in adults with ADHD of at least moderate severity. Adults should have ADHD symptoms pre-existing from childhood, which should ideally be confirmed by a third party.

Long-term usefulness of atomoxetine for extended periods (over 12 months) should be periodically re-evaluated for the individual patient. Consider trial periods of stopping medication or reducing the dose when assessment of the overall balance of benefits and harms suggests this may be appropriate.

## 2. Indications

- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in adults when response to previous methylphenidate or lisdexamfetamine treatment is considered clinically inadequate after a 6 week trial, or are not tolerated.

## 3. Locally agreed off-label use

This shared care protocol only supports use of atomoxetine within its licensed indication. The following information should be provided in correspondence to support prescribing in line with this shared care.

- Dosing specific to the indication
- Relevant interaction information
- Any additional monitoring requirements over and above the shared care.
- Duration of treatment
- Frequency of review.
- Specific features of adverse effects or deterioration pertinent to the specific indication for which it is used

## 4. Contraindications and cautions

This information does not replace the Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC), and should be read in conjunction with it. Please see [BNF](#) & [SPC](#) for comprehensive information.

### Contraindications:

- Hypersensitivity to the active substance or to any of the excipients
- During treatment with monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOI), or within 14 days of discontinuing those drugs, due to the risk of hypertensive crisis
- Narrow angle glaucoma
- Severe cardiovascular or cerebrovascular disorders, including severe hypertension, heart failure, arterial occlusive disease, angina, haemodynamically significant congenital heart disease, cardiomyopathies, myocardial infarction, potentially life-threatening arrhythmias, disorders caused by the dysfunction of ion channels, cerebral aneurysm, or stroke
- History of phaeochromocytoma

### Cautions:

- Psychiatric and neuropsychiatric symptoms or disorders, including psychotic symptoms, aggressive or hostile behaviour, emotional lability, suicide-related behaviour (suicide attempts or suicidal ideation), motor or verbal tics, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and mania
- Known serious structural cardiac abnormalities; consultation with a cardiac specialist required before treatment
- Underlying medical conditions which could be worsened by increases in blood pressure and heart rate, including hypertension, tachycardia, or cardiovascular or cerebrovascular disease
- Prolonged QT interval (congenital or acquired, e.g. drug-induced) or family history of QT prolongation
- Any condition that may predispose patients to hypotension or conditions associated with abrupt heart rate or blood pressure changes (risk of orthostatic hypotension)
- Concomitant medications that elevate blood pressure: assess for neurological signs and symptoms at every monitoring visit
- Other conditions that may precipitate or otherwise induce cerebrovascular conditions: assess for neurological signs and symptoms at every monitoring visit
- Hepatic insufficiency; dose adjustments required, see section 5.
- History of seizures
- Susceptibility to angle-closure glaucoma
- Age over 65 years; safety and efficacy has not been systematically evaluated
- Known CYP2D6 poor metaboliser genotype. Dose reduction required, see section 5.

## 5. Initiation and ongoing dose regimen

- Transfer of monitoring and prescribing to primary care is normally between 8 - 12 weeks, and when the patient's dose has been optimised and with satisfactory investigation results for at least 4 weeks.
- The duration of treatment & frequency of review will be determined by the specialist, based on clinical response and tolerability.
- All dose or formulation adjustments will be the responsibility of the initiating specialist unless directions have been discussed and agreed with the primary care clinician.
- Termination of treatment will be the responsibility of the specialist.

### **Initial stabilisation:**

- Adults weighing 70 kg or above: 40 mg daily for at least 7 days,
- Adults weighing up to 70 kg: 500 micrograms/kilogram daily for at least 7 days

Then titrated according to clinical response and tolerability. Total daily dose may be given as a single dose in the morning or in two equally divided doses, with the last dose no later than the early evening.

**The initial stabilisation period must be prescribed by the initiating specialist.**

### **Maintenance dose (following initial stabilisation):**

- Adults weighing 70 kg or above: 80 mg to 100 mg daily in a single dose, or in two equally divided doses, as above. Usual maximum total daily dose is 100 mg. Higher doses, up to a maximum of 120 mg, are off-label and must be given under the direction of a specialist.
- Adults weighing up to 70 kg: up to 1.2 mg/kg daily in a single dose, or in two equally divided doses, as above. Usual maximum total daily dose is 1.8 mg/kg daily. Higher doses, up to a maximum of 120 mg, are off-label and must be given under the direction of a specialist.

**The initial maintenance dose must be prescribed by the initiating specialist.**

### **Conditions requiring dose adjustment:**

#### Hepatic insufficiency:

- moderate hepatic insufficiency ([Child-Pugh](#) Class B) reduce starting and target doses to 50% of usual (reduce dose by half, i.e. starting dose should be 20mg daily, and total daily dose should not exceed 50mg daily)
- severe hepatic insufficiency ([Child-Pugh](#) Class C) reduce starting and target doses to 25% of usual (reduce dose by three quarters, i.e. starting dose should be 10mg daily, and total daily dose should not exceed 25mg daily)

#### Renal insufficiency:

No adjustment is necessary, but be aware that atomoxetine may exacerbate hypertension in patients with end stage renal disease.

#### Known CYP2D6 poor metaboliser genotype:

Due to several-fold increase in atomoxetine exposure, consider a lower starting dose and slower up-titration.

## **6. Pharmaceutical aspects**

Route of administration	<b>Oral</b>
Formulation	Atomoxetine hydrochloride hard capsules: 10 mg, 18 mg, 25 mg, 40 mg, 60 mg, 80 mg, 100 mg Atomoxetine hydrochloride 4 mg/mL oral solution
Administration details	Atomoxetine can be taken with or without food. Capsules should not be opened for administration: risk of irritation.

	<p>Oral solution should not be mixed with food or water; it can prevent the full dose being administered and can negatively affect the taste.</p> <p>If a dose is missed then take it as soon as possible, but no later than the early evening. Do not take more than the usual total daily dose in any 24 hour period. A double dose should not be taken to make up for a missed dose.</p>
Other important information	The initiating specialist will decide the formulation on an individual basis as this will depend on the needs and preferences of the patient

## 7. Significant medicine interactions

The following list is not exhaustive. Please see [BNF](#) or [SPC](#) for comprehensive information and recommended management.

- **MAOIs:** avoid atomoxetine use whilst using MAOIs and for a minimum of 14 days after stopping MAOIs. Increased risk of adverse effects.
- **CYP2D6 inhibitors:** increased atomoxetine exposure. E.g. selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), quinidine, terbinafine, bupropion, cinacalcet, dacomitinib, and panobinostat. Slower dose titration and lower final dose may be necessary. Clinical response and tolerability should be re-evaluated if a CYP2D6 inhibitor is started or stopped.
- **Potent inhibitors of other cytochrome P450 isoforms** in patients who are poor CYP2D6 metabolisers. It is not clear whether there is a clinically significant increase in atomoxetine exposure in this patient group.
- **Beta-2 agonists, including salbutamol:** high dose beta-2 agonists, such as salbutamol, may potentiate cardiovascular effects.
- **Drugs which prolong the QT interval:** risk of QT interval prolongation. E.g. antipsychotics, class IA and III anti arrhythmics, some antibiotics such as ciprofloxacin or erythromycin, methadone, mefloquine, tricyclic, antidepressants, lithium, and some selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) such as citalopram.
- **Drugs which cause electrolyte imbalance:** risk of QT interval prolongation. E.g. thiazide diuretics.
- **Drugs which lower the seizure threshold:** risk of seizures. E.g. tricyclic antidepressants, SSRIs, antipsychotics, phenothiazines, mefloquine, chloroquine, bupropion, and tramadol. Use caution when stopping medications that may induce seizures on withdrawal, such as benzodiazepines.
- **Anti-hypertensive drugs:** effectiveness of anti-hypertensives may be decreased, monitoring is required.
- **Drugs that increase blood pressure:** possible additive effects, monitoring is required.
- **Drugs that affect noradrenaline:** possible additive or synergistic pharmacological effects. E.g. dexamfetamine, lisdexamfetamine, imipramine, venlafaxine, mirtazapine, pseudoephedrine, phenylephrine.

## 8. Baseline investigations, initial monitoring and ongoing monitoring to be undertaken by specialist

Monitoring at baseline and during initiation is the responsibility of the specialist; only once the patient is optimised on the chosen medication with no anticipated further changes expected in immediate future, will a transfer to primary care for prescribing and monitoring occur.

### Pre-treatment (specialist):

- A medical history and cardiovascular assessment, taking into account conditions that may be contraindications, risk of pregnancy (where applicable), and to ensure the patient meets the criteria for ADHD and that pharmacological treatment is required
- Risk assessment for substance misuse and drug diversion
- Pulse, BP
- Weight, Height, (use centiles in children), Appetite
- Psychiatric symptoms

- ECG (if history of congenital heart disease or previous cardiac surgery, sudden death in a first-degree relative under 40 years suggesting a cardiac disease, family history of CVD or arrhythmia, shortness of breath on exertion compared with peers, fainting on exertion or in response to fright or noise, palpitations, chest pain suggestive of cardiac origin, signs of heart failure, heart murmur or hypertension, current treatment with a medicine that may increase cardiac risk)

**Initial monitoring (specialist):**

- Assess heart rate and blood pressure after every change of dose
- Weight and height (using centiles as per NICE)
- Assessment for new or worsening psychiatric symptoms following every change of dose
- Assessment of symptom improvement. Discontinue if no improvement is observed after one month.

**Ongoing monitoring (ADHD):**

Ensure the patient receives a review at least annually with a healthcare professional with training and expertise in managing ADHD. This will be by the specialist, as per local arrangements, and should include a review of ADHD medication, including patient preferences, benefits, adverse effects, and ongoing clinical need. Consider trial periods of stopping medication or reducing the dose when assessment of the overall balance of benefits and harms suggests this may be appropriate. If continuing medication, document the reasons why.

Review outcomes should be communicated to the primary care prescriber in writing, with any urgent changes also communicated by telephone.

**9. Ongoing monitoring requirements to be undertaken by primary care**

See section 10 for further guidance on management of adverse effects/responding to monitoring results. Specialist clinician will monitor until primary care prescriber has agreed to take over prescribing.

Monitoring and actions	Frequency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blood pressure and heart rate, and assessment for cardiovascular signs or symptoms</li> <li>• Weight and appetite</li> <li>• Assessment for new or worsening psychiatric and neurological signs or symptoms</li> </ul>	At least every 6 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of adherence, and for any indication of atomoxetine abuse, misuse, or diversion</li> </ul>	As required, based on the patient's needs and individual circumstances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review to ensure patient has been offered and attended an annual review with a healthcare professional with expertise in ADHD</li> </ul>	Annually

**If monitoring results are forwarded to the specialist team, please include clear clinical information on the reason for sending, to inform action to be taken by secondary care.**

## 10. Adverse effects and other management

Any serious adverse reactions should be reported to the MHRA via the Yellow Card scheme.

Visit [www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard)

For information on incidence of ADRs see relevant summaries of product characteristics

Result	Action for primary care	
<b>As well as responding to absolute values in laboratory tests, a rapid change or a consistent trend in any value should prompt caution and extra vigilance</b>		
<b>Cardiovascular</b>	Symptoms such as palpitations, exertional chest pain, unexplained syncope, dyspnoea or other signs or symptoms suggestive of cardiac disease	Refer for urgent specialist cardiac evaluation
	Hypertension	Manage as per local pathways, taking into account risk of clinically significant interactions with several types of antihypertensive medication (see <a href="#">section 7</a> ). If blood pressure is significantly raised (see guidance box immediately above), reduce dose of atomoxetine by half and discuss with specialist for further advice
<b>Weight or BMI</b>	outside healthy range, anorexia or weight loss	Exclude other reasons for weight loss. Give advice as per <a href="#">NICE NG87</a> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take medication with or after food, not before</li> <li>• additional meals or snacks early in the morning or late in the evening when stimulant effects have worn off</li> <li>• obtaining dietary advice</li> <li>• consuming high-calorie foods of good nutritional value</li> </ul> Discuss with specialist if difficulty persists; dose reduction, treatment break, or change of medication may be required.
<b>Gastrointestinal</b>	Including abdominal pain, vomiting, nausea, constipation, dyspepsia	Review and provide advice on dosing; patients may benefit from taking atomoxetine in two equally divided doses (once in the morning, and once in the late afternoon or early evening). Generally resolves.
<b>Psychiatric disorders</b>	New or worsening psychiatric symptoms, e.g. suicide related behaviour, psychosis, mania, aggressive or hostile behaviour, suicidal ideation or behaviour, motor or verbal tics (including Tourette's syndrome), anxiety, agitation or tension, bipolar disorder, or depression	Contact specialist team and refer for psychiatric assessment if appropriate. Refer for urgent psychiatric assessment if suicide related behaviour or ideation occurs.  Discuss ongoing benefit of treatment with specialist team.

<b>Hepatic effects</b>	Signs or symptoms of liver injury, e.g. abdominal pain, unexplained nausea, malaise, jaundice, or darkening of urine	Perform liver function tests (LFTs), including serum bilirubin, and discuss with specialist team. Discontinue atomoxetine permanently in patients who develop jaundice or for whom there is laboratory evidence of liver injury (if unclear if injury or transient derangement, discuss urgently with specialist).
<b>Nervous system disorders</b>	Somnolence or sedation	Review and provide advice on dosing; patients may benefit from taking atomoxetine in two equally divided doses (once in the morning, and once in late afternoon or early evening). Generally resolves.
	New onset of seizures, or increased seizure frequency	Discuss with specialist team. Discontinuation of atomoxetine should be considered.
Suspicion of abuse, misuse, or diversion		Discuss with specialist team

## 11. Advice to patients and carers

The specialist will counsel the patient with regard to the benefits and risks of treatment and will provide the patient with any relevant information and advice, including patient information leaflets on individual medicines.

**The patient should be advised to report any of the following signs or symptoms to their primary care prescriber without delay:**

- Abnormally sustained or frequent and painful erections. **If an erection persists for more than 2 hours go to A&E;** this is an emergency.
- Sudden acute, painful eye(s), impaired vision, red eye(s), and/or semi-dilated and fixed pupil; risk of **angle closure glaucoma**, seek immediate medical attention, ideally from an eye casualty unit or A&E.
- Symptoms suggestive of cardiac disease (e.g. palpitations, exertional chest pain, unexplained syncope, or dyspnoea).
- New or worsening psychiatric symptoms (e.g. psychotic symptoms, aggressive or hostile behaviour, emotional lability, suicide-related behaviour (suicide attempts or suicidal ideation), motor or verbal tics, anxiety, depressive symptoms, or mania).
- Report **suicidal thoughts or behaviour**, and development or worsening of irritability, agitation, and depression.
- New or worsening neurological symptoms (e.g. severe headache, numbness, weakness, paralysis, seizures, or impairment of coordination, vision, speech, language, or memory).
- Risk of **hepatic injury**: report unexplained nausea, malaise, jaundice, or darkening of urine, and new onset severe or persistent abdominal pain.
- Symptoms of allergic or anaphylactic reactions (e.g. rash, angioedema, or urticaria).
- If they suspect they may be pregnant or are planning a pregnancy.

**The patient should be advised:**

- Attend regularly for monitoring and review appointments with primary care and specialist, and keep contact details up to date with both prescribers. It may not be safe to continue prescribing without regular review, and patients should be aware that their medicines could be stopped if they do not attend appointments.
- Not to stop taking atomoxetine without talking to their doctor and not to share their medication with anyone else.

Patient information:

- NHS – Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/>
- Choice and medication: [Prescribing information | Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder | CKS | NICE](#)
- Royal College of Psychiatrists – ADHD in adults. <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders/adhd-in-adults>

## 12. Pregnancy, paternal exposure and breast feeding

It is the responsibility of the specialist to provide advice on the need for contraception to male and female patients on initiation and at each review, but the ongoing responsibility for providing this advice rests with both the primary care prescriber and the specialist.

### **Pregnancy:**

Atomoxetine is not recommended for use during pregnancy unless a clinical decision is made that the potential benefit outweighs the risk to the foetus.

Evidence on exposure to atomoxetine during pregnancy is too limited to draw firm conclusions on adverse outcomes. Clinicians should be aware that patients may have other risk factors which independently alter the risks, and additional monitoring should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Patients who become pregnant while taking atomoxetine, or who plan a pregnancy, should be referred to the specialist team for review.

### **Breastfeeding:**

There is no published evidence on the safety of atomoxetine in breastfeeding. Decisions to use atomoxetine while breastfeeding should be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the risks to the infant and the benefits of therapy. Long half-life in slow metabolisers increases risk of accumulation in some breastfed infants. Infants should be monitored for symptoms of CNS stimulation (e.g. decreased appetite or slow weight gain, sleep disturbances, gastrointestinal symptoms), although these may be difficult to detect.

Information for healthcare professionals: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/medicines/atomoxetine/>

### **Paternal exposure:**

No evidence regarding adverse outcomes following paternal exposure was identified. Further information for patients: [bumps - best use of medicine in pregnancy \(medicinesinpregnancy.org\)](https://www.bumps-bestuseofmedicineinpregnancy.org/)

## 13. Specialist contact information

Add name of specialist(s) responsible for patient assessment, diagnosis & prescribing recommendation.

1. Name 1 (add qualification)
2. Name 2 (add qualification)
3. Name 3 (add qualification)

Add email address:

Add any alternative contacts:

Add contact phone number:

Add contact days / hours available:

Out of hours contact details: Consider emergency services

If a patient requires additional support, which is not related to their ADHD treatment, then referral via a health, education or social care practitioner, would normally be required.

## 14. Additional information

Where patient care is transferred from one specialist service or GP practice to another, a new shared care agreement must be completed. Ensure that the specialist is informed in writing of any changes to the patient's GP or their contact details.

## 15. References

- eBNF. Atomoxetine. Accessed via <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/drug/atomoxetine.html> on 01/09/2021
- Atomoxetine hydrochloride 10 mg hard capsules (Strattera®). Date of revision of the text 26/01/2021. Accessed via <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/5531>
- NICE NG87: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management. Last updated September 2019. Accessed via <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng87/> on 14/04/21
- NICE NG43: Transition from children's to adults' services for young people using health or social care services. Last updated February 2016. Accessed via <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng43/> on 01/09/21
- UKTIS. Use of atomoxetine in pregnancy. Last updated December 2017. Accessed via <https://www.toxbase.org/poisons-index-a-z/a-products/atomoxetine-in-pregnancy/> on 26/05/2021
- Specialist Pharmacy Service. Safety in Lactation: Drugs for ADHD. Last updated October 2020. Accessed via <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/safety-in-lactation-drugs-for-adhd/> on 26/05/2021
- Specialist Pharmacy Service. Atomoxetine Lactation Safety Information. Last updated January 2018. Accessed via <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/medicines/atomoxetine/> on 26/05/2021
- NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: Atomoxetine. Last updated January 2021. Accessed via <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/prescribing-information/atomoxetine/> on 09/06/21.
- MHRA. Drug Safety Update: Atomoxetine (Strattera ▼): increases in blood pressure and heart rate. January 2021. Accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/atomoxetine-strattera-increases-in-blood-pressure-and-heart-rate> on 09/06/21.

## 16. Other relevant national guidance

- Shared Care for Medicines Guidance – A Standard Approach (RMOC). Available from <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/rmoc-shared-care-guidance/>
- NHSE guidance – Responsibility for prescribing between primary & secondary/tertiary care. Available from <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/responsibility-for-prescribing-between-primary-and-secondary-tertiary-care/>
- General Medical Council. Good practice in prescribing and managing medicines and devices. Shared care. Available from <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/good-practice-in-prescribing-and-managing-medicines-and-devices/shared-care>
- NICE NG197: Shared decision making. Last updated June 2021. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng197/>

## 17. Local arrangements for referral

Define the referral procedure from specialist to primary care prescriber & route of return should the patient's condition change.

- Specialist contacts patient's GP requesting transfer of prescribing and monitoring responsibility as detailed within this shared care. Note: The request to prescribe must be accompanied by sufficient clinical information in order for the patient's GP to be able to consider the appropriateness of the request to prescribe in response to the details of the assessment, diagnosis and medication initiation and stabilisation. Full details can be found here [Request to prescribe following referral to an adult ADHD service](#).
- Specialist completes and signs Appendix 1 & sends to patient's GP (GP may need to forward a copy of shared care document to provider – available here [Frimley ICB Shared Care Documents](#)).
- GP completes Appendix 2 or Appendix 3 as appropriate to confirm their decision and sends to provider.
- GP either takes over prescribing responsibility & monitoring under the shared care arrangements, or if declined, the provider is responsible for ongoing prescribing and monitoring for the individual.
- When seeking specialist advice relating to the management of ADHD for an individual continuing with shared care, see section 13 for contact details.
- If the patient develops a concurrent mental health or neurodevelopmental condition requiring specialist care where their ADHD is best managed by the specialist service, reassume prescribing responsibilities, or inform the patient's GP that a referral to an alternative provider is required in order to properly support the patient's change in condition.

## Appendix 1: Shared Care Request letter (Specialist to Primary Care Prescriber)

Dear *[insert Primary Care Prescriber's name]*

Patient name: *[insert patient's name]*

Date of birth: *[insert date of birth]*

NHS Number: *[insert NHS Number]*

Diagnosis: *[insert diagnosis]*

As per the agreed **Frimley ICB shared care protocol** for *[insert medicine name]* for the treatment of *[insert indication]*, this patient is now suitable for prescribing to move to primary care.

The patient fulfils criteria for shared care, and I am therefore requesting your agreement to participate in shared care. Where baseline investigations are set out in the shared care protocol, I have carried these out. I can confirm that the following has happened with regard to this treatment:

	Specialist to complete
<i>The patient has been initiated on this therapy and has been on an optimised dose for the following period of time:</i>	
<i>Baseline investigation and monitoring as set out in the shared care documents have been completed and were satisfactory</i>	Yes / No
<i>The condition being treated has a predictable course of progression and the patient can be suitably maintained by primary care</i>	Yes / No
<i>The risks and benefits of treatment have been explained to the patient</i>	Yes / No
<i>The roles of the specialist/specialist team/ Primary Care Prescriber / Patient and pharmacist have been explained and agreed</i>	Yes / No
<i>The patient has agreed to this shared care arrangement, understands the need for ongoing monitoring, and has agreed to attend all necessary appointments</i>	Yes / No
<i>I have enclosed a copy of the shared care protocol which covers this treatment</i>	Yes / No
<i>I have included with the letter, copies of the information the patient has received</i>	Yes / No
<i>I have provided the patient with sufficient medication to last until</i>	
<i>I have arranged a follow up with this patient in the following timescale</i>	

Treatment was started on *[insert date started]* and the current dose is *[insert dose and frequency]*.

If you are in agreement, please undertake monitoring and treatment from *[insert date]* NB: *date must be at least 1 month from initiation of treatment.* The next blood monitoring is due on *[insert date]* and should be continued in line with the shared care guideline.

Please respond to this request for shared care, in writing, within 14 days of the request being made where possible.

Specialist\* signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Specialist name (PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

Specialist qualification(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\* A healthcare professional with training and expertise in managing ADHD. This may include a consultant, doctor, nurse or pharmacist specialising in diagnosing and managing ADHD.

## Appendix 2: Shared Care Agreement Letter (Primary Care Prescriber to Specialist)

### Primary Care Prescriber Response

Dear *[insert Doctor's name]*  
Patient *[insert Patient's name]*  
NHS Number *[insert NHS Number]*  
Identifier *[insert patient's date of birth and/or address]*

Thank you for your request to accept prescribing responsibility for this patient under a shared care agreement and to provide the following treatment

Medicine	Route	Dose & frequency

I can confirm that I am willing to take on this responsibility from *[insert date]* and will complete the monitoring as set out in the shared care protocol for this medicine/condition.

**DELETE IF NOT APPLICABLE: I shall be working within the Frimley ICB Locally Commissioned Service for adults with ADHD and will provide both the 6 month physical health check and the annual medication review within primary care. (There should, therefore, be no further charges once I agree to take over prescribing this patient's medication). If the patient's condition should change sufficiently that I require specialist input, I shall contact you for advice and guidance, for which the review rate may be charged.**

Primary Care Prescriber signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Care Prescriber name (PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Care Prescriber address/practice stamp**

**Appendix 3: Shared Care Refusal Letter (Primary Care Prescriber to Specialist)**

**Re:**

Patient *[insert Patient's name]*  
NHS Number *[insert NHS Number]*  
Identifier *[insert patient's date of birth and/or address]*

Thank you for your request for me to accept prescribing responsibility for this patient.

In the interest of patient safety, NHS Frimley ICB, in conjunction with local acute trusts have classified *[insert medicine name]* as a Shared Care medication, and requires a number of conditions to be met before transfer can be made to primary care.

Shared care is a term used within the NHS to describe the situation where a specialist doctor wishes to pass some of the patient’s care, such as prescription of medication, over to their general practitioner (GP). This is something that can be requested but the guidance is that this may only be done if the GP agrees. The GP will need to consider a number of factors to decide if this is safe.

If care is transferred, from this point the primary care prescriber will be responsible for the prescriptions they sign. The GMC states that when taking on prescribing, all clinicians must keep informed about the medications they prescribe. They need to be able to recognise serious and adverse side effects and ensure that appropriate clinical monitoring arrangements are in place. They must also ensure adequate monitoring. This is a significant responsibility and decisions must be made carefully bearing this in mind.

GPs need to be mindful of focussing on undertaking essential services to put patients first and foremost before agreeing to take on extra work; not working beyond their competences or over safety limits.

If a GP feels that it is not appropriate for any reason for them to take over this extra work, then appropriate arrangements for the continuing care of the patient would be as a default that the prescribing should remain with the specialist service.

I regret to inform you that in this instance I am unable to take on responsibility due to the following:

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss any aspect of my letter in more detail.

Yours sincerely

**Primary Care Prescriber signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Care Prescriber name (PRINT):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Care Prescriber address/practice stamp**