

# Lincolnshire Prescribing and Clinical Effectiveness Bulletin

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## Insulin Pen Needles- preferred options update

### Background

NHS England has updated its guidance on “Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care”.

The updated guidance now includes advice on the prescribing of needles for prefilled and reusable insulin pens. The recommendations are:

- Prescribers in primary care should not initiate insulin pen needles that cost more than £5.00 per 100 needles for any diabetic patients.
- Prescribers should be supported in de-prescribing insulin pen needles that cost more than £5.00 per 100 needles for any diabetic patients, switching to needles costing less than £5.00 per 100.

PACEF last issued guidance on the preferred list of pen needles in December 2014 and scrutiny of our existing formulary products showed that all but one pen needle now falls outside the recommended price limit of £5.00.

PACEF has reviewed the use of pen needles and issued the following recommendations:

### Recommended Pen Needles

**The recommended pen needles will fit all major insulin delivery pen devices currently available.**

<u>First line</u>	<u>Cost (£)/100</u>
CareFine (Neon diagnostics)	£2.75
GlucorX CarePoint (GlucorX)	£2.75
<u>Second Line</u>	<u>Cost (£)/100</u>
BD Viva (Becton)	£3.59
Mylife Penfine Classic (Ypsomed)	£3.55
PROfine (Prosum medical)	£3.80

In exceptional circumstances, the Diabetic Specialist Nurse (DSN) may request for pen needles that are not on the preferred list from the GP; and the DSN will state the specific reason for this.

### Exceptional Circumstances

The NHSE recommendations do not exempt any patient; but states that “for patients that are not able to self-administer it may be appropriate that a safety needle is used by the health care professional, however this would not need to be prescribed on prescription”.

Lincolnshire PACEF however continues to support the provision on prescription of safety and click-on needles for specific patient groups as outlined below.

- i. **Safety Needle:** These products should only be prescribed when healthcare workers are administering insulin or if the patient is self-administering and ‘needle phobic’.

<u>Product</u>	<u>Cost (£)/100</u>
Microdot max safety product (Cambridge Sensors)	£12.89
Glucorx Safety Pen Needles	£12.95
Neon Verifine safety (Nipro diagnostics)	£14.89
Microdot Verifine (Cambridge sensors)	£17.00

- ii. **Click on Needle:** These snap onto the pen with an audible click and have advantages for people with limited vision or restricted manual dexterity.

<u>Product</u>	<u>Cost (£)/100</u>
MyLife Clickfine	£9.11

### Optimum needle length

NHSE guidance on insulin pen needles also includes a recommendation from the Forum for Injection Technique (FIT) UK which considers the 4mm needle to be the safest pen needle for adults and children regardless of age, gender and Body Mass Index (BMI).

Using needles of a shorter length helps to prevent intramuscular injection of insulin. (IM injection of insulin should be avoided as it can result in unpredictable blood glucose levels). Therefore, needle choice should be the most cost effective 4mm needle.

For patients currently using longer pen needle lengths (8mm, 12mm), it is advisable to change to a shorter needle length (6mm or less) but only after discussion with a healthcare professional, to ensure they receive advice on the correct injection technique.

### References

1. NHSBSA: Drug Tariff, June 2019 (<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/drug-tariff>)
2. NHSE: Items which should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: an update and a consultation on further guidance for CCGs (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed-in-pc-ccg-guidance-v2.pdf>)
3. Lincolnshire Joint Formulary: (<http://www.lincolnshirejointformulary.nhs.uk/chaptersSubDetails.asp?FormularySectionID=6&SubSectionRef=06.01.01.03&SubSectionID=A100&drugmatch=4213#4213>)
4. Forum for Injection Technique (FIT) UK (<http://fit4diabetes.com/united-kingdom/>)

**Produced by:**

**Medicines Management & Optimisation Service  
Optum Commissioning Support Unit**

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T 020 7121 0560 | E [info@optum.co.uk](mailto:info@optum.co.uk) | [optum.co.uk](http://optum.co.uk)  
10th Floor, 5 Merchant Square, Paddington, London, W2 1AS

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