

Ref: RPJ.FL/LMC/497

Date: 07 October 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Prescribing costs across Cheshire and Merseyside (C&M) are increasing at a much higher rate than expected. Rising Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) prescribing is significantly contributing to this. In the last 4 months the ICB has spent £3.3m more on Tirzepatide than for the same period last year. If we continue at this rate the cost to the ICB for the year will be £16million (£11m more than planned).

This is affecting the ICB's ability to control its overall financial position and if we do not get our prescribing spend under control then the ICB will have no option other than to cover the overspend using funding from other services and discretionary spend, including primary care local enhanced and quality schemes (LES). We really must avoid this situation so are seeking your help and support.

Recent data suggests that more than half of C&M Tirzepatide prescribing is either

- a) not compliant with NICE TA924 – Tirzepatide for Type 2 Diabetes  
[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta924](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta924)
- or
- b) not compliant with NHSE commissioning guidance for Weight Management  
[www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/PRN01879-interim-commissioning-guidance-implementation-of-the-nice-technology-appraisal-ta1026-and-the-NICE-fu.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/PRN01879-interim-commissioning-guidance-implementation-of-the-nice-technology-appraisal-ta1026-and-the-NICE-fu.pdf)

We appreciate that this is an area of considerable pressure and confusion, so the intention of this letter is to provide you with accurate information and support about how to manage requests from patients and ensure that your prescribing is in line with guidance.

## **DIABETES**

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) should only be prescribed for Type 2 diabetes in line with NICE TA924 and the C&M Area Prescribing Group (APG) formulary guidance.

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Tirzepatide is recommended as an option for treating type 2 Diabetes in adults, alongside diet and exercise, only if blood glucose is inadequately controlled and:

- Triple therapy with metformin and two other oral antidiabetic drugs is ineffective, not tolerated, or contraindicated, **and**
- The patient has a BMI of 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more with specific psychological or other medical problems associated with obesity, **or**
- The patient has a BMI of less than 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, **and:**
  - Insulin therapy would have significant occupational implications, **or**
  - Weight loss would benefit other significant obesity-related complications.

Note: Lower BMI thresholds (usually reduced by 2.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) should be used for people from South Asian, Chinese, other Asian, Middle Eastern, Black African, or African-Caribbean backgrounds.

Prescribers must also consider MHRA safety updates and counsel patients on side effects prior to initiating Tirzepatide or recommending it to be prescribed.

**Please note that we are also writing to secondary care clinicians to remind them of their responsibility in adhering to NICE guidance for prescribing in Type 2 Diabetes. If you are asked by a secondary care clinician to prescribe outside of NICE guidance for Type 2 Diabetes, please DO NOT prescribe and let your Place Head of Medicines Management (HOMM) know via email. The ICB will support you in this decision and your Place HOMM will take action to address this. A list of contact details is in Appendix 1.**

## **WEIGHT MANAGEMENT**

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) is also subject to NICE TA1026 for managing overweight and obesity [Overview | Tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity | Guidance | NICE](#)

NHSE has introduced compulsory NHS commissioning guidance, which will phase in the use of Tirzepatide over 12 years, with much stricter eligibility criteria than the NICE criteria, particularly in the first 3 years.

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	Funding Variation Year*	Estimated Cohort Duration	Cohorts	Cohort Access Groups	
				Comorbidities	BMI**
To June 2026	Year 1 (2025/26)	12 months	Cohort I	≥4 'qualifying' comorbidities hypertension, dyslipidaemia, obstructive sleep apnoea, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus	≥ 40
June 2026 – April 2027	Year 2 (2026/27)	9 months	Cohort II	≥4 'qualifying' comorbidities hypertension, dyslipidaemia, obstructive sleep apnoea, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus	35 – 39.9
April 2027 – June 2028	Year 2/3 (2026 and 2027/28)	15 months	Cohort III	3 'qualifying' comorbidities hypertension, dyslipidaemia, obstructive sleep apnoea, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus	≥ 40

\*Funding Variation year refers to the financial year.

\*\* Use a lower BMI threshold (usually reduced by 2.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) for people from South Asian, Chinese, other Asian, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean ethnic backgrounds

To comply with NHSE requirements, the ICB has set up local commissioning arrangements via a LES operating at PCN level (except in Knowsley and St Helens where single Place level service models are being used). Services have now gone live in most PCNs and where not yet live are due to commence imminently. For information on your local service please contact your PCN Clinical Director.

**As a result, Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) must not be prescribed by GPs for weight management outside of the PCN LES.**

Please do not refer patients to other weight management services as an alternative route to accessing this medication as they too are unable to prescribe Tirzepatide.

Prescribing for weight management outside of these arrangements is not supported and is being closely monitored as part of the ICB's financial turnaround programme.

As for Type 2 Diabetes, please alert your HOMM to any inappropriate requests from secondary care to prescribe Tirzepatide for weight management.

The ICB is monitoring and auditing the prescribing of Tirzepatide and will take action where prescribing is outside of guidance.

In line with your existing data sharing agreement a set of searches has been developed to identify **cohorts of patients currently prescribed Tirzepatide**

These searches are now available for your practice to review and utilise – they can be found within Enterprise Searches and Reporting on your GP systems, under **00. ICB searches and reports**, the folder is called : **TIRZEPATIDE injections v1.2**

The purpose of this data is to complete national returns and provide local insight

Please note:

- Data will be extracted **weekly** at **practice level** – the first practice level data extraction will take place on/just after **1<sup>st</sup> October 2025**
- **Numeric data** only, will be shared with the **ICB** and **LMC** to support system-wide oversight and planning

Heads of Medicines Management, ICB Clinical Directors, and LMC colleagues will work with practices and clinicians where Tirzepatide prescribing is higher than expected or, according to audit, outside of NHSE commissioning or NICE criteria.

We recognise that this is a challenging area and patient expectations do not always align with the requirements of national guidance. To support you with these conversations the ICB has made available on our [website](#).

- A set of FAQs
- A copy of this letter
- A letter for you to share with patients that supports your decision to follow NICE guidance and NHSE commissioning guidance

Your continued commitment to compliant prescribing is essential to address our financial challenges and protect services and we appreciate your support. If you have any questions about the contents of this letter, please speak to your Place Head of Medicines Management, Place Clinical Director or your local LMC.

Kind regards,



Dr Fiona Lemmens  
Associate Medical Director for Transformation



Professor Rowan Pritchard Jones  
Executive Medical Director



Susanne Lynch MBE  
Chief Pharmacist

*Continued overleaf ...*

**LMC Cheshire**



*Dr Daniel Harle*  
*Medical Director*

**LMC Liverpool**



*Dr Rob Barnett*  
*Secretary, Liverpool LMC*

**LMC Mid Mersey**



*Dr Ivan Camphor*  
*Medical Secretary*

**LMC Sefton**



*Dr David L Smith*  
*Chair, Sefton LMC*

**LMC Wirral**



*Dr Abel Adegoke*  
*Wirral LMC Honorary Secretary*

**APPENDIX 1**

Place Head of Medicines Management

St Helens - [Nicola.Cartwright@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:Nicola.Cartwright@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

Liverpool - [Geraldine.McKerrell@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:Geraldine.McKerrell@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

Sefton - [Jennifer.Johnston@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Johnston@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

Knowsley - [Carolyn.Barton@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:Carolyn.Barton@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

Wirral - [Jole.Hannan@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:Jole.Hannan@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

Halton - [Becky.Birchall@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:Becky.Birchall@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

Warrington - [alison.evans@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:alison.evans@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

Cheshire East and Cheshire West - [Janet.Kenyon@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:Janet.Kenyon@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk) and  
[Andrea.Lunt@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:Andrea.Lunt@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

**APPENDIX 2**

For formulary details, please refer to:

- Cheshire and Merseyside Formulary: Tirzepatide Prescribing Statement – Type 2 Diabetes  
[www.cheshireandmerseysideformulary.nhs.uk/docs/files/tirzepatide\\_t2dm.pdf](http://www.cheshireandmerseysideformulary.nhs.uk/docs/files/tirzepatide_t2dm.pdf)

- Cheshire and Merseyside Formulary: Tirzepatide Prescribing Statement – Overweight and Obesity  
[www.cheshireandmerseysideformulary.nhs.uk/docs/files/tirzepatide\\_weight.pdf](http://www.cheshireandmerseysideformulary.nhs.uk/docs/files/tirzepatide_weight.pdf)