

## Prescribing antiepileptic medication in Staffordshire

There has been repeated concerns in primary care regarding the stabilisation of anti-epileptic medications. PCN and Practice Pharmacists are reviewing clinical letters and noting more often that practices are being asked to titrate these medications. Specialist neurology clinicians are including a management plan to ask GPs to prescribe and follow this plan to stabilise the patient.

For anti-epileptics, currently the Staffordshire formularies clearly states the following:

**Restriction: Initiation and stabilisation by specialist**

As a reminder, **all patients' newly prescribed anti-epileptic medication must be initiated and stabilised in secondary care**. This is due to the complexity associated with these drugs i.e. dose titration, risk of repeated seizures during titration phase, de-prescribing of a particular anti-epileptic medicine while another one is being titrated, monitoring and interpreting blood tests, rapid referral back into secondary care where difficulty stabilising a patient exists etc.

GPs should only take on prescribing where such patients have been stabilised on their doses and required monitoring blood test completed. Specialist clinicians should not send management plans to primary care for GPs to follow. The CCG expects specialist clinicians to comply with the directions of the local formulary to promote patient safety and improve the process of care transfer between providers.

It is noted for paediatric patients, medication/condition stabilisation and what is deemed 'stable' can be more difficult to define than for adult patients, taking in to account a paediatric patient is growing and developing and stabilisation can take some time. In these cases, whilst initiation and stabilisation should still be undertaken by a specialist, the decision over when a GP takes over prescribing should be a discussion and agreement between specialist and GP. This discussion being based on each individual patient when a prescribing request is received, being mindful of what is deemed stable for an individual paediatric patient. Transfer of prescribing cannot occur until the GP has provided agreement.

For further information or queries, please contact the Staffordshire and Stoke-On-Trent CCGs Medicines Optimisation Team on:

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Regards

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