

**Approval date:** July 2018

**Review date:** To be reviewed when mechanisms have been put in place to support delivery of the South East London implementation plan

**South East London Area Prescribing Committee**  
**FreeStyle Libre® Flash Glucose Monitoring system**  
**Frequently asked questions for patients**  
**Updated July 2018**

## 1. What is FreeStyle Libre®?

FreeStyle Libre® 'flash glucose monitoring system' measures glucose levels in people with diabetes using a sensor applied to the skin. FreeStyle Libre® is an alternative to finger-prick blood glucose testing, and can produce a near-continuous record of measurements which can be accessed on demand.<sup>1</sup> Readings are taken by scanning the sensor with a FreeStyle Libre® reader or some mobile phones [android mobile phones with 'Near-field Communication' (NFC) capabilities and iOS (iPhone 7 higher, operating system 11 or higher)].

People using FreeStyle Libre® still need to use finger-prick blood glucose testing:

- when they feel unwell; for example when they have the flu, diarrhoea or are vomiting
- when the FreeStyle Libre® reader shows low glucose readings (hypoglycaemia) or warns that hypoglycaemia is likely
- when symptoms do not match meter readings
- before they drive and during driving (to meet Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency [DVLA] requirements)

## 2. Who has had access to FreeStyle Libre® before November 2017?

GPs and other prescribers were not able to prescribe FreeStyle Libre® on the NHS before November 2017. People may have chosen to self-fund FreeStyle Libre® by purchasing it directly from the manufacturer (Abbott).

## 3. What changed on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017?

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017, FreeStyle Libre® sensors were added to the NHS 'Drug Tariff' therefore it is now possible for GPs and other prescribers to prescribe FreeStyle Libre® sensors on the NHS but only with local health group approval. The 'Drug Tariff' is a complete list of medicines and medical devices that can be prescribed on the NHS.

## 4. If a drug or device 'can' be prescribed, does it mean it 'should' be prescribed?

Not necessarily. There are lots of drugs and devices that can be prescribed but not all offer good value for money to the NHS (this is known as being cost-effective). The NHS has processes in place to identify cost-effective drugs or devices; these are then recommended nationally (e.g. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence [NICE] guidance) or locally.

## 5. What does NICE say about FreeStyle Libre®?

NICE have not provided national guidance on the use of this device. They issued a 'Medtech innovation briefing' which summarised the costs, evidence base and perceived benefits, however, it did not include a recommendation.

## 6. What is the NHS in London doing about FreeStyle Libre®?

On the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017, the Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee (RMOC) issued a national position statement for the use of flash glucose monitoring in 5 groups of patients but in the context of clinical priorities and how services are set up within the London region, the London RMOC members felt that more detailed guidance was essential for London.

The NHS in London is keen to avoid variability in availability depending where patients live. In order to achieve this aim, London-wide implementation guidance, based on the national position statement, has been developed that provides recommendations on the appropriate place in therapy for FreeStyle Libre® and information regarding ongoing monitoring and review. Specialist clinicians in South East London (SEL) have worked with diabetes networks in London organisations, which include patient representatives living with diabetes, to establish which patients are most likely to benefit from FreeStyle Libre®. Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have been asked to consider FreeStyle Libre® alongside other drugs, devices or services that are also competing for access to their limited funding.

This process ensures that local decisions are robust and informed by a review of evidence to demonstrate clinical and cost-effectiveness.

## **7. What are Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in South East London doing about FreeStyle Libre®?**

CCGs in South East London have developed a more detailed local plan for implementing the London-wide implementation guidance. Mechanisms are currently being put in place to support delivery of this plan which focuses on areas that need to be addressed locally for example staff and patient training to enable safe and effective prescribing. Therefore, we are not expecting clinicians in South East London to prescribe FreeStyle Libre® sensors and would recommend they do not prescribe until mechanisms have been put in place to support delivery of the implementation plan. It is not possible to place an exact date for completion of the local implementation plan however, it is anticipated that eligible patients will be able to access FreeStyle Libre® on the NHS in South East London in Autumn 2018.

## **8. Should patients ask GPs and other prescribers to prescribe FreeStyle Libre®?**

The health community in South East London ask that patients do not request FreeStyle Libre® from their GP and other prescribers as FreeStyle Libre® is not recommended for prescribing in South East London until mechanisms have been put in place to support delivery of the implementation plan. We will update this position statement once the local implementation plan has been completed. Patients who chose to self-fund Freestyle Libre® should continue to do so.

## **9. Will this interim position statement affect those currently funded for Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) by the NHS?**

This interim position statement will have no impact on patients currently funded for Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) by the NHS.

### **References**

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. MIB110: FreeStyle Libre for glucose monitoring. (2017). Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/advice/mib110/chapter/Summary>. (Accessed: 16.10.17)
2. Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee FreeStyle Libre Position Statement (2017): <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/regional-medicines-optimisation-committee-freestyle-libre-position-statement/> (accessed April 2018)

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