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## Position Statement

### Pharmacy Minor Ailments Scheme: Head Lice

- The preferred treatment option for the management of head lice to be wet – combing using a nit comb in accordance with NICE Guidance<sup>1</sup>
- Proprietary preparations, such as Hedrin® or Derbac® to no longer be provided either on prescription or via the pharmacy minor ailments scheme and to be purchased over-the-counter
- The nit-comb will continue to be available via the pharmacy minor ailments scheme

#### Introduction

As Blackpool CCG (BCCG) operates within finite budgetary constraints there is a recognised need to prioritise prescribing resources and provide interventions with the greatest proven health gain for the population. As patient self-care is recognised by all parties in the health system to be an important model to promote, the pharmacy minor ailments scheme [MAS] provides patients who live within NHS Blackpool CCG and registered with a Blackpool GP with advice and, where appropriate, access to medicines, by community pharmacies supporting integration and self-care.

Minor ailments are defined as ‘common or self-limiting or uncomplicated conditions which can be diagnosed and managed without medical intervention’<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, self-care for minor ailments allows patients to manage their condition without the need of a healthcare professional. It is believed that a major proportion of health problems (around 80%) are managed at home.

The MAS enhanced service was introduced by Blackpool PCT in 2003, re-launched in 2010, so a review of the medicines included in the approved formulary is both timely and overdue.

#### Background

Currently in Blackpool there is approximately one community pharmacy per 3,200 people making access relatively easy. This is a higher concentration of pharmacies than the North West average which is one community pharmacy per 4,000 people. Pharmacy staff are experts in providing advice around minor ailments and are accessible without an appointment: 42 out of 44 pharmacies in Blackpool provide the MAS. The community pharmacist provides advice on specified minor conditions, including head lice and supplies medicines according to the local formulary free of charge to those patients who are exempt from prescriptions charges, including those patients who have a prepayment certificate. Patients who normally pay for their prescription will pay no more than a prescription charge for the service.

The patient should normally attend the pharmacy in person to receive a consultation and if appropriate, a supply of medicine, in the same way they would be required to attend a GP appointment for a prescription. There may be exceptions to this and pharmacists are asked to exercise their professional judgement in deciding if a supply should be made in the absence of the patient.

These medicines do not require the patient to be seen by a GP, and are readily available to be purchased over the counter (OTC) from pharmacies, supermarkets and some discount stores.

For the period 2015/16, 42 Blackpool community pharmacies participated in the MAS and provided 18,868 under the MAS. The most popular intervention was for head lice which represented 40% of all consultations at a total cost of £79,000.00.

As head lice consultations constituted the majority of interventions, it is has been agreed that head lice preparations are no longer provided by the scheme. The nit –comb will continue to be provided under the MAS.

Medicines Optimisation, Blackpool CCG  
**July 2016**

Primary Care, Blackpool CCG  
**For review: July 2018**

### **References**

1. CKS Head Lice Last revised February 2015  
<http://cks.nice.org.uk/head-lice>
2. <http://www.selfcareforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Self-Care-An-Ethical-Imperative.pdf>