

Freestyle Libre – Q and A's

1. What's the latest news on access to Freestyle Libre for Type 1 patients in Leeds?

The Leeds CCGs Partnership is currently working closely with specialist diabetes colleagues in Leeds to agree which patients will benefit most from using Freestyle Libre whilst keeping expenditure on this device at an affordable level.

A meeting is planned within the next few weeks to agree criteria to identify these patients and a Diabetes UK representative has been invited to attend.

It is not possible to place an exact completion date on these discussions, but any decision will be communicated on our website as soon as it is available.

2. What about the benefits of Freestyle Libre?

The Leeds CCGs Partnership recognises Freestyle Libre as advancement in the monitoring of diabetes, and for some patients it may improve their glycaemic control and therefore long-term outcomes.

However, for many patients, whilst Freestyle Libre is a more convenient way of monitoring glycaemic control, the evidence base for long-term benefit is unclear at this time. And as Freestyle Libre doesn't measure *blood* glucose levels, there may well be a need for finger prick testing as well.

In October 2017, The Northern Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee of NHS England considered the place of Freestyle Libre within diabetes care. Their statement included the following – "... at the present point in time there are significant limitations in available clinical trial data and economic analysis that make it difficult to make an appropriate judgment as to its [*Freestyle Libre's*] place in therapy."

NHS organisations and prescribers are not obligated to supply every item listed in the Drug Tariff and can decide to restrict prescribing if an evaluation of the evidence finds that the device is not cost-effective or unsuitable for local use.

The Leeds CCGs Partnership has a statutory responsibility to ensure we spend the local health budget for our area as effectively as possible. Sometimes this means we have to make some difficult decisions regarding what we do and don't fund. Therefore we have to consider Freestyle Libre against other items competing for NHS resources in order to make a decision on the level of local funding available

3. On what basis has the £365 for finger pricking been established?

The figure of £365 has been based on 4-5 finger pricks a day. [NICE Guidance 17 for Type 1 Diabetes recommends testing at least 4 times a day - [link](#)]

For patients who finger prick 8 times a day, the cost of test strips and lancets would be around £650 per year. This is still considerably cheaper than the cost of the Freestyle Libre sensors (£910/yr), and this figure does not take account of the fact that patients may still have to finger prick whilst using Freestyle Libre (e.g. if driving, or unwell). Freestyle Libre does not measure *blood* glucose levels which is why finger pricking may still be necessary.

4. What about the savings from reduction in complications later on?

The trials in Type 1 diabetes only looked at a 6-12 month duration in well-controlled diabetics, so the evidence cannot currently indicate that Freestyle Libre will reduce complications later in life for all Type 1 diabetics. Further evidence is still required in poorly controlled Type 1 diabetics over a longer time period before we know if there will be an impact on long-term complications.

5. If I am already using Freestyle Libre as I have been buying it privately, can I now get it on prescription?

The decisions and criteria regarding which patients will benefit most from using Freestyle Libre will not be based on what has already been purchased, but on the clinically based criteria agreed for local NHS funding. Therefore it is possible that once our policy is agreed, privately paying patients will not receive Freestyle Libre on an NHS prescription.

6. How will you select patients eligible to receive Freestyle Libre on NHS prescription?

The CCG will be advised by the local diabetes specialists and the limited available evidence as to which patients are most likely to benefit from using Freestyle Libre whilst maintaining a financial balance for the CCGs. These criteria have not yet been agreed.

We will also consider the views and policies of our neighbouring CCGs to ensure continuity of care across NHS boundaries.

7. Have you agreed a policy?

The CCGs have a Policy for Continuous Glucose Monitoring in Type 1 Diabetics on Insulin pumps, which includes Freestyle Libre. For all other patients, we are still working with the diabetes specialists to agree a policy.

8. Where can the policy be found?

The policy can be found [here](#).

9. When do you plan to agree a policy?

We are meeting the relevant specialists in the next few weeks with the aim of producing criteria for patient selection for the use of Freestyle Libre on the NHS. Diabetes UK have been invited to that meeting.