

PE1619/F

NHS Lothian submission of 11 April 2018

Thank you for your communication of 3 April 2018 seeking a response from NHS Lothian on how continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) has been rolled out in Lothian following the Scottish Government's investment in insulin pumps and CGM. This is in response to a public petition urging the Scottish Government to "make continuous glucose monitoring sensors, such as the Freestyle Libre, available under prescription to all patients with type 1 diabetes."

As a point of clarification, there is a difference between CGM, as funded by the Scottish Government, and the Freestyle Libre, which is a flash glucose monitor (FM). Both CGM and FM measure the glucose in the fluid that surrounds cells (interstitial fluid) rather than in the blood stream and both involve wearing a sensor continuously. However, CGM takes a reading every few minutes regardless of what the user is doing. There are a range of CGM options available, but many have the ability to communicate directly with insulin pumps to turn off insulin delivery if blood glucose levels are dropping. Many CGMs also have an alarm that will alert the user to rapid changes in blood glucose (both low and high). FM does not communicate directly with insulin pumps and does not have an alarm. It will download the last 8 hours of glucose data every time the user takes a reading, but if the user does not take a reading for more than 8 hours, that data is lost, unlike CGM where the data is stored. Scottish Government funding is explicitly limited to CGM and cannot be used for FM because there is a more robust evidence base for CGM.

The Freestyle Libre sensors were added to the Lothian formulary in February 2018. The diabetes teams at the Royal Infirmary, Western General and St John's Hospitals have all been providing education sessions for suitable patients and contacting their GPs to request prescription of the Freestyle Libre. The first education session took place less than two weeks after we received formal confirmation of the formulary decision. Eligibility is determined using criteria recommended by the Scottish Diabetes Group. Patients who attend East Lothian Community Hospital and Leith Community Treatment Centre can also access the education sessions at the three main hospital sites and if eligible, they can also obtain Libre sensors on prescription.

The Scottish Government allocation for CGM in 2017/18 provided Lothian with 20 CGMs, which were allocated to 10 children and 10 adults. Eligibility criteria differ in children and adults. For children, the younger age groups are prioritised. In the adult group, those with recurrent severe hypoglycaemia are prioritised. All diabetes consultants were contacted and asked to refer suitable patients. Consideration was also given to some direct patient requests. These requests were all reviewed by a panel of 3 consultants (one from each hospital site) to ensure that patients were prioritised in a consistent manner according to our pre-defined criteria. We expect confirmation very soon of the amount of Scottish Government funding for CGM in the 2018/19 financial year and anticipate being able to use all of the funding provided.

I trust this response meets your requirements.