

Position Statement: Prescribing nutritional products/vitamin supplements

Hertfordshire and West Essex ICS does not support prescribing of nutritional products/vitamin supplements unless the product is both listed in the Drug Tariff and prescribed for an ACBS approved indication for that specific product (as stated in the Drug Tariff)

Recommendations

- If the nutritional product/vitamin supplement is not listed in the Drug Tariff, do not prescribe it AND
- For ACBS listed nutritional products only prescribe for the ACBS indication/s listed for that product AND
- For all nutritional products prescribe in line with ICS nutrition prescribing guidance and Over the Counter (OTC) Medicine’s Policy
- If the patient still wishes to take a non ACBS approved nutritional product/vitamin supplement or to take an ACBS approved product outside of its ACBS indication/s, the patient should be advised to purchase the product OTC or to seek a private prescription for it

Rationale

Some food type products are considered to have the characteristics of drugs in certain conditions.

The Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS) advises NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) on the circumstances in which these food type products may be regarded as drugs – these circumstances are commonly known as a products “ACBS indications”.

All ACBS approved products are listed in the Drug Tariff together with their approved ACBS indication/s.

In addition Part XVIIIIC of the Drug Tariff states:

- *Medicinal products in seventeen therapeutic categories are excluded from prescription on the grounds that (on expert advice) they have no clinical or therapeutic advantage over other, cheaper drugs in the same categories which are available to purchase. The list includes Vitamins*
- *Some products may be considered as "borderline substances" but are not truly medicinal products with clinical or therapeutic value (i.e. they are not ACBS listed). They are also excluded from NHS prescription for that reason*
- *As well as being freely available on sale over the counter to the general public the cost to the NHS if the product(s) were to be supplied on prescription is not considered a priority for the use of the limited resources available to the NHS*

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