

## UK Medicines Information (UKMi): a briefing paper

UKMi is a clinical and strategic network that helps NHS patients and professionals make informed decisions about medicines. Our outputs are crucial to delivering the patient outcomes, experiences, and safety envisaged in *Liberating the NHS*. The newly published guidance from the NPC “*Ensuring the delivery of prescribing, medicines management and pharmacy functions in primary and community care (NPC Competency Framework)*” highlights that commissioning specialist pharmacy services such as medicines information will support GP commissioners and enable delivery of the medicines management agenda.

Our services are locally responsive but nationally coordinated with the three key themes of our work summarised below.

### THEME 1

#### Strategic support for medicines use

We support commissioners and providers to make strategic decisions about medicines by:

- Maintaining the National electronic Library for Medicines (NeLM, see <http://www.nelm.nhs.uk>) which is accessed 38 million times per year, includes >40,000 documents, and is a major future component of *NHS Evidence*, see <http://www.evidence.nhs.uk>
- Producing guidance on managing the introduction of new medicines and financial planning—we review medicines in development and new national guidance in our resources *New Drugs Online* and *Prescribing Outlook*, see <http://www.nelm.nhs.uk/en/NeLM-Area/Evidence/Horizon-Scanning/>
- Enabling commissioning decisions for new medicines through significant contribution to local decision making processes e.g. the *London Cancer New Drugs Group*
- Enabling commissioning decisions for individual patients e.g. by publishing reviews of the evidence that support *individual funding requests* and the *cancer drugs fund*
- Promoting uptake of national guidance e.g. by alerting busy professionals to summarised NICE guidance.

## THEME 2

### Clinical support for safe and effective use of medicines

We advise professionals and patients about the safe and effective use of medicines by:

- Providing a valued service that is publicised in the BNF and answers around 300,000 clinical enquiries every year from primary and secondary care professionals. We also directly advise patients on appropriate use of medicines. See [International Journal of Pharmacy Practice; 18: 353–361](#)
- Updating professionals about medicines via a daily email newsletter for 14,000 subscribers, see <http://www.nelm.nhs.uk/en/NeLM-Subscription/>
- Helping NHS organisations improve patient safety and preventing duplication of effort in response to safety initiatives such as those from the NPSA e.g. [NPSA RRR: Reducing harm from omitted and delayed medicines in hospital. A tool to support local implementation - NeLM \[2.1.9\]](#)
- Publishing best-evidence answers to frequently asked clinical questions (over 200 are available online) e.g. [Therapeutic options for patients unable to take solid oral dosage forms - NeLM \[2.1.9\]](#)
- Developing a system used across the NHS (MiDatabank) that enables due process and good information governance in decision-making about medicines.
- Providing a national network of tailored advice about medicines in specialist clinical areas e.g. drugs in lactation, renal failure, and cardiothoracics.

## THEME 3

### Governance and infrastructure

We underpin our functions with a strong national emphasis on clinical governance. We achieve this by:

- Developing and auditing our services against national standards.
- Providing NHS-wide training resources that help pharmacists problem-solve and offer clinical advice about medicines.
- Delivering a critical incident reporting system specific to Medicines Information but which is aligned to current national patient safety strategies.
- Enabling sharing of information about medicines within organisations through innovative IT solutions e.g. MiDatabank and through provision of a local formulary function on NeLM.
- Working in partnership with other organisations e.g. NPSA, MHRA, HEIs