

Agenda Item

6.1

Joint Commissioning Committee

Blueteq Electronic Prior Approval System

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Awdur yr Adroddiad / Report Author	Iolo Doull Medical Director
Cyflwynydd yr Adroddiad / Report Presenter	Iolo Doull Medical Director
Noddwr yr Adroddiad / Report Sponsor	Iolo Doull, Medical Director

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad / Report Purpose	Choose an item. For Noting
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Engagement (internal/external) undertaken to date (including receipt/consideration at Committee/Group)		
Committee / Group / Individuals	Date	Outcome
	Click or tap to enter a date.	Choose an item.

Acronyms / Glossary of Terms	
AWMSG	All Wales Medicines Strategy Group
AWTTC	All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre
DPIA	Data Privacy Impact Assessment
HCD	High Cost Drug
MAA	Managed Access Agreement
NWJCC	NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

NHSE	NHS England
VUNT	Velindre University NHS Trust
WHSSC	Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee

1. SITUATION/BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to update the Joint Committee on the extension of the procurement contract for the Blueteq® electronic prior approval system to ensure business continuity for purchasing High-cost Drugs (HCD) for NHS Wales.

1.1 Background

Blueteq® is an electronic prior approval system for HCD. The system was procured for NHS Wales by the predecessor organisation the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) and the Welsh Government in 2018 and it was rolled out in 2021 with the purpose of providing clinical and financial governance. This assurance is provided through auditing the initiation and on-going treatment of Specialised Commissioned HCDs within NHS Wales and ensuring compliance with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) recommendations. Since 1 April 2024, the NWJCC (taking over from WHSSC) has overseen its management and implementation.

Blueteq® is used extensively by NHS England for commissioning HCDs. Many HCDs come with Managed Access Agreements (MAA) which then offer significant rebates on the list price of the medicines. Frequently the securing of the rebate on the cost of a medicine is dependent on the inclusion of the patient on the Bluteq system, and thus failure to maintain Bluteq access would potentially limit access to these rebates. Furthermore, there is an increasing trend towards indication-based pricing. For example the rebate for the HCD Burosumab for X-linked hypophosphataemic rickets is dependent on the age and clinical features of the patient. The rebate for older patients with certain clinical criteria is significantly greater than for younger children. Without the documented age and clinical criteria (which Blueteq® provides) the default is the much lower rebate. This is a developing pressure on cancer drugs, where often a medicine may have multiple indications for different cancers with markedly different clinical and cost effectiveness. This results in different rebates (and thus costs) dependent on the cancer indication. Blueteq® offers the information required for indication-based pricing.

Blueteq® is instrumental in capturing and validating savings from cost improvement projects, particularly to identify patients potentially eligible for switching from an originator product to a biosimilar product (resulting in a cost saving).

For every medicine recommended by NICE or the AWMSG for a NWJCC commissioned service, a Blueteq® is generated for the medicine that

incorporates the access criteria in the recommendation. The forms are created in conjunction with clinical experts and contain questions to ensure appropriate use of the medication. The information is gathered through the completion and submission of Blueteq® forms by clinicians.

The first phase of Blueteq® was for NWJCC HCDs only, but since April 2025 the second 'All Wales,' phase of HCDs in HBs has accelerated. The HB's have decided on their own key priority areas including weight management, Rheumatology, Ophthalmology, Dermatology, Haematology, migraine and respiratory. There is a phased approach within each HB as to how they ensure all HCD medicines are included on Blueteq®. All HBs are compliant however Velindre University NHS Trust (VUNT) is still waiting for completion of its Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). Forms are approved once on an All Wales basis, overseen by the Programme Manager within All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre (AWTTC).

The JCC manages the Blueteq® contract for both the JCC and the HBs, and includes the system's annual licence, hosting, maintenance, technical support and ongoing education.

2. SPECIFIC MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

2.1 Extension of the Blueteq NHS Wales contract

The Blueteq® contract was due for renewal the 25th April 2025. Failure to renew the contract poses a major risk to operational continuity, with a risk of delay in patients accessing therapies pending funding approval, potential inequity of access to therapies, reduced audit compliance and a significant financial risk from failure to access rebates. To ensure business continuity the NWJCC has extended the current contract with Blueteq® Ltd by one year, on an interim basis.

2.2 NHS England Procurement Process

NHSE are currently undertaking a procurement process to select a provider for their HCD system and database. As a number of JCC specialist services are provided through NHSE it is essential to have parity in the system used across borders. Having different HCD systems in Wales and England could result in service providers in NHSE having to use different systems for cross border patients being treated for the same indication. The extension of the contract is in compliance with NHS Wales procurement rules/advice.

2.3 All-Wales Health Board Implementation of Blueteq®

Blueteq® is currently being rolled out in secondary care within NHS Wales for rheumatology and obesity drugs, there are plans to extend the scope in the future.

2.4 Cost of Blueteq® Contract

Renewal cost of the Blueteq® contract/licence may increase due to the implementation of Blueteq® within the health boards. As the number of available drugs on Blueteq® increases so will the engagement from clinicians, necessitating additional resource within Blueteq® for training and support. The increased demand could lead to Blueteq® charging more for these services. It is worth noting that Blueteq LTD® has not increased the contract price for the year ahead 2025-2026.

3. ASSESSMENT

Objectives / Strategy	
Dolen i Amcan (au) Strategol CBC / Link to JCC Strategic Objectives(s)	Maximise Value
	Ensure Quality Reduce duplication Improve equity and population health
Dolen i Ddeddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol – Nodau Llesiant / Link to Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – Wellbeing Goals 150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf (futuregenerations.wales)	A More Equal Wales
	If more than one applies please list below:
Dolen i Hwyluswyr Ansawdd <i>(Canllawiau Statudol Dyletswydd Ansawdd (llyw.cymru)) / Link to Enablers of Quality</i> (Duty of Quality Statutory Guidance (gov.wales))	Data to Knowledge
	If more than one applies please list below:
Dolen i Feysydd Ansawdd	Effective
	Efficient Equitable

<p>(Canllawiau Statudol Dyletswydd Ansawdd (llyw.cymru)) / Link to Domains of Quality (Duty of Quality Statutory Guidance (gov.wales))</p>	
<p>Effaith Amgylcheddol/ Cynaliadwyedd (5R) / Environmental / Sustainability Impact (5Rs)</p>	<p>No - Not Applicable If more than one applies please list below:</p>

Impact Assessment		
<p>Ansawdd <i>Ydych chi wedi ymgymryd â Sgrinio Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Ansawdd? / Quality</i> <i>Have you undertaken a Quality Impact Assessment Screening?</i></p>	<p>Yes: <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Cydraddoldeb <i>Ydych chi wedi ymgymryd â Sgrinio Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb? / Equality</i> <i>Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment Screening?</i></p>	<p>Yes: <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Cyfreithiol / Legal</p>	<p>There are no specific legal implications related to the activity outlined in this report.</p>	
<p>Enw da / Reputational</p>	<p>There is no direct impact on the reputation of the Joint Committee as a result of the activity outlined in this report.</p>	
<p>Effaith Adnoddau <i>(Pobl / Ariannol) / Resource Impact</i> <i>(People / Financial)</i></p>	<p>There is no direct impact on resources as a result of the activity outlined in this report.</p>	

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Committee are asked to:

- **Note** the report.

5. NEXT STEPS

The NWJCC will renew the contract with Blueteq® for 1 year.

The NWJCC will maintain contact with the NHS England team who are assessing future system options.

The NWJCC would aim to procure the same system as NHS England in the future.