

Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances: Programme of work for 2022

Programme of work for 2022

In line with [the Government's Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees](#), the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS) is publishing its programme of work for the year 2022.

The ACBS did not complete the programme of work it set for 2021. The work is still on going. On this basis, the Committee decided to rollover the same work programme into 2022. This programme of work is below and it outlines briefly the issue and aim of each area of work. Further information on all areas will be communicated at appropriate times and the Committee will consult with relevant stakeholders on these matters.

Standardising the ACBS clinical indications, guidance and assessment of applications

The ACBS application form and guidance was developed in 2009. Manufacturers, the Committee and the ACBS Secretariat have separately expressed concerns about the documents and agree they need to be revised to improve and standardise submission quality and assessment. Stakeholders also feel that guidance and assessment could be improved if the ACBS clinical indications were standardised. Currently, manufacturers decide the clinical indication for their products, which means many similar products have different indications. Standardising the clinical indications will allow for better comparisons of products both in terms of formulation and cost.

The ACBS will initially work with the BSNA and its members to develop new guidance. This is because the BSNA, as the industry representative body, is able to represent the views of industry as a whole both in terms of the complexity of the products and the volumes supplied.

Ready-to-drink oral nutritional supplements (ONS)

Ready-to-drink ONS are generally presented in 125ml and 200ml volumes. However, the ACBS has recently received applications for many other presentation sizes and for presentations looking to deviate from the standard practice of prescribing two bottles per day. The Committee also feels there may no longer be a clinical need for some products and wants to clarify when a product is nutritionally complete. Therefore, the work will look to decide the ONS presentations that the ACBS will continue recommending for listing in Part XV of the Drug Tariff and those that it does not consider appropriate for prescribing in NHS primary care.

The cost of sunscreens and moisturisers

The sunscreens and moisturisers listed on Part XV of the Drug Tariff cost more on prescription than those available to consumers on the open market. Therefore, the prescribing of these products is not a cost-effective use of public money. The ACBS also understands that, in the interest of public money and the patient's own finances, some clinicians recommend patients buy sunscreens and moisturisers on the open market instead of paying for them on prescription. This work will aim to analyse the pricing of sunscreens and moisturisers and develop a strategy that ensures the prescribing of these products is a cost-effective use of public money.