

Prescribing tip for information

Red, Amber & Green (RAG) Colour Classification of Medicines



To prescribe medicines safely, a clear understanding of where clinical and prescribing responsibility rests between Specialists and Primary Care prescribers is needed. Medicines across Lancashire and South Cumbria are categorised by a colour which indicates where the prescribing responsibility for that medication lies. These ‘traffic light’ colours consider the safety and monitoring requirements for each individual medication.

Summary of Classifications:

Medicines Colour Rating	Primary Care Prescribing Recommended	Shared Care Agreement Required	Monitoring Required	Extra Notes
RED	No (unless continuity of supply is required while arrangements are made)	No	Intensive	Specialist GPs* may initiate/prescribe in exceptional circumstances
AMBER 2 (with Shared Care)	Yes – following successful initiation and stabilization by Secondary Care	Yes	Significant (Enhanced Service may be suitable)	On-going communication required between GP and specialist
AMBER 1 (with Shared Care)	Yes – following recommendation or initiation by Secondary Care	Yes	Minimal or Routine	GPs advised not to take on prescribing until they have been adequately informed by letter of their responsibilities
AMBER 0	Yes – following recommendation or initiation by Secondary Care	No	Minimal or Routine	Specialists should supply enough information so GPs can confidently prescribe
GREEN	Yes	No	Minimal or None	Within licensed or local recommendations
GREEN (restricted)	Yes	No	Minimal or None	Provided additional criteria specific to the medicine or device are met, <u>or</u> the medicine or device is used following the failure of other therapies as defined by the relevant LSCMMG pathway.
PURPLE	Low Priority for Prescribing	No	n/a	see Low Priority for Prescribing Policy
GREY	No	No	n/a	Not yet been reviewed or are being reviewed, includes drugs where funding has not yet been agreed.
GREY N. P	No	No	n/a	Grey not prioritised, low priority for review
BLACK	No	No	n/a	Not recommended unless there is a local need

* Specialist GPs are those with a specialist interest (GPSI) working in primary care prescribing only within their specialty

The purpose of RAG rating is to provide guidance for prescribers. Ultimately the final decision to prescribe any treatment (irrespective of its RAG rating) lies with the prescriber. On occasions specialists and primary care prescribers may agree to work outside of this guidance and in such cases the management of these patients should be agreed on an individual basis.

If practices are reviewing existing prescribing it is vital that treatment should **not** suddenly be stopped. Supply must be continued until arrangements are put into place for further provision.

For local decisions on RAG rating please visit the Lancashire & South Cumbria Medicines Management Group’s website (<https://www.lancsmmg.nhs.uk>) and scroll down to the CCG’s decisions which may differ from the LSCMMG recommendation. (NB: - Care should be taken when interpreting the website as there may be a range of different RAG ratings for the same drug depending on the indication for which the drug is being used)

To contact the Medicines Optimisation Team please phone 01772 214302

If you have any suggestions for future topics to cover in our prescribing tips, please contact Nicola.schaffel@nhs.net