

Guidance on insulin pen needles and preferred formulary choices for Kent and Medway

There are multiple different brands of insulin pen needles available, of varying sizes and gauges. A list and comparison of the preferred formulary pen needle brands for use in Kent and Medway can be found in **Table 1** below. This document supersedes existing guidelines that were in place across Kent and Medway for the prescribing of insulin pen needles.

The preferred Kent and Medway formulary cost-effective insulin pen needle brands cost under £2.75 for a supply of 100 needles. All the listed pen needles are preferred choices, there is no first-line/preferred brand(s), so choice from this list is down to patient/healthcare professional decision and based on individual requirements/circumstances.

Please note, to ensure cost-effective prescribing, prescribers must prescribe by the both the brand and size/gauge as mentioned in the below table as they appear on the clinical system.

Injection Technique

It is important to reinforce good injection technique/provide training to patients/carers administering insulin. The Forum for Injection Technique (FIT) UK Injection Technique recommendations offer the most up to date guidance on improving the health outcomes of people with diabetes on insulin through good injection technique. The guidelines include information on optimal injection technique, intramuscular risk, and advice on the screening, prevention, and management of lipohypertrophy. The 4th edition of the FIT UK “UK Injection and Infusion Technique Recommendations” can be found [here](#).

Table 1: Preferred Kent and Medway cost-effective needles for pre-filled and reusable pen injectors

Hypodermic Needle	Size and Gauge	Cost per 100 needles (As per NHSBSA Electronic Drug Tariff June 2023)	Compatibility
GlucorX CarePoint	4mm/31 gauge	£2.75	Universal fit on all insulin pens (See here for more information)
	5mm/31 gauge	£2.75	
	6mm/31 gauge	£2.75	
	8mm/31 gauge	£2.75	
GlucorX CarePoint Ultra	4mm/32 gauge	£2.75	Universal fit on all insulin pens (See here for more information)
GreenFine (formerly CareFine)	4mm/32 gauge	£2.75	Universal fit, compatible with all leading brands (See here for more information)
	5mm/31 gauge	£2.75	
	6mm/31 gauge	£2.75	
	8mm/31 gauge	£2.75	

Insupen Original	4mm/32 gauge	£2.49	Compatible with all standard insulin pens (See here for more information)
	4mm/33 gauge	£2.49	
	5mm/31 gauge	£2.49	
	6mm/31 gauge	£2.49	
	6mm/32 gauge	£2.49	
	8mm/30 gauge	£2.49	
	8mm/31 gauge	£2.49	
	8mm/32 gauge	£2.49	
Microdot Max	4mm/32 gauge	£2.74	Compatible with all major brands of insulin (See here for more information)
	6mm/31 gauge	£2.74	

Please note that 10mm and 12mm needles are also available for some of the above pen needle brands but have not been included in the preferred formulary list. The International Scientific Advisory Board advises that there is generally no medical reason/rationale or indication for recommending needles longer than 8mm. For more information please see FIT UK guidance [here](#). All pen needles >6mm should be initiated by a specialist only.

The above preferred cost-effective formulary pen needles are recommended for use in Kent and Medway, and they are expected to be suitable for most patients. However, it is recognised that some patients may have individual needs and alternative non-preferred pen needles may need to be considered in exceptional circumstances. e.g., if a patient is not able to use the above brands/have shown difficulties with them. When diabetes specialists initiate alternative pen needles to meet specific patient needs, they will need to inform the GP of this to support ongoing prescribing of consumables.

The above preferred pen needles have a 3-bevel needle tip. If a patient requires a 5-bevel needle tip:

- The GlucoRx FinePoint insulin pen needle range, which costs £4.50 per 100 needles, can be prescribed. They are available as 4mm, 5mm, 6mm, 8mm/31 gauge (also as 10mm and 12mm/29 gauge but these are not recommended for use, as per the above, unless initiated by a specialist)
- BD Micro-Fine Ultra Pen Needles, which cost £4.99 per 100 needles, can be prescribed. They are available as 4mm/32 gauge and 5mm/31 gauge.