

# NHS England Guidance: Medicines of Low Value

## Position Statement : Rubefacients

### Summary

NHS Waltham Forest CCG does not support the routine prescribing of topical rubefacients on prescription in line with NHS England's national guidance on medicines which should no longer be routinely prescribed. *Examples of these products include Algesal® cream, Balmosa® cream, Deep Freeze® cold gel 2%, Movelat® cream (this list is not exhaustive).*

- New Patients: Prescribers should not initiate rubefacients for any new patients
- Existing patients: Patients established on rubefacients should be reviewed with a view to changing the analgesic to an alternative.
- **There are no patient exceptionalities identified**

**NHS England category: Item of low clinical effectiveness, where there is a lack of robust evidence of clinical effectiveness or there are significant safety concerns.**

Rubefacients (excluding topical NSAIDs) are warming muscle rub products, with limited evidence of efficacy. They include nicotinate, salicylate, oils or camphor and known brand names are Movelat®, Algesal®, Diffiam®, Ralgex®, Deep Heat® etc. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE) clinical guideline on osteoarthritis does not recommend rubefacients for treating osteoarthritis. There is a lack of evidence to support the use of rubefacients in acute or chronic musculoskeletal pain.

### Deprescribing advice

- Identify patients who have these products on repeat and discontinue as no evidence to support long-term use.
- Patients who want to continue using rubefacients can be advised that these can be purchased OTC in the pharmacy.
- Do not automatically substitute with topical NSAID preparations.

### Reference

PrescQIPP. (2015, October ). *Rubefacients for the treatment of soft-tissue disorders and topical pain relief (DROP-List)*. Retrieved from PrescQIPP.