

High-Cost Drugs Treatment Pathway for Psoriasis (Adults)

North East London

Document control	
Document type	Clinical Pathway
Document name	North East London High-Cost Drugs Treatment pathway for Psoriasis
Document location	https://primarycare.northeastlondon.icb.nhs.uk/home/meds/
Search terms	High-Cost Drug, Biologic, Anti-TNF, IL23, IL17, TYK2 Inhibitor, Adalimumab, Certolizumab, Etanercept, Infliximab, Apremilast, Dimethyl Fumarate, Ixekizumab, Brodalumab, Ixekizumab, Secukinumab, Ustekinumab, Guselkumab, Risankizumab, Tildrakizumab, Deucravacitinib, Spesolimab
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Ratified by	North East London Systems Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Board

Document Version History		
Date produced	Version	Comment/Changes
June 2023	1.2	Added Secukinumab and Ustekinumab into dose escalation
September 2023	1.3	Added Deucravacitinib to the pathway.
		Dose escalation updated for adalimumab inadequate response (primary and secondary failure)
		Appendix 1 updated to include route of administration
March 2024	1.4	Treatment in Tuberculosis added to the pathway
Nov 2025	1.5	<p>Added section for generalised pustular psoriasis to include NICE TA1070 - Spesolimab for treating generalised pustular psoriasis flares</p> <p>Generalised pustular flares added to definitions</p> <p>Table 2: Added column for TYK2 inhibitors. Deuvracacitinib moved to this section.</p> <p>Appendix 2 updated for ustekinumab biosimilar</p> <p>Updated information regarding treatment in pregnancy and breastfeeding</p> <p>Pathway algorithm updated to add ustekinumab biosimilar – Appendix 1</p> <p>Removal of ciclosporin requirement and reference to PUVA and add phototherapy – Appendix 1</p> <p>Funding section updated to cover Blueteq expectations when treatment has been given in an acute setting.</p> <p>Revised the Adverse Reaction section for greater clarity and readability</p>

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Scope and Principles

This document outlines the treatment pathway for adult patients in North East London diagnosed with Psoriasis, with reference to the NCL psoriasis pathway and guideline, based on current National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance for psoriasis. It is to be used in conjunction with the NICE guidance and the published NICE Technology Appraisal (TA) guidance for each individual high-cost drug.

There is currently no pathway for generalised pustular psoriasis flares as there is currently only one drug licensed for this condition. A pathway will be developed if/when further drugs received NICE approval

The pathways are subject to change as new evidence, NICE TAs or local agreements are released or updated that will impact on the information outlined in this document. This includes changes in drug costs that may impact on cost-effectiveness and drug choice in the treatment pathway.

It is expected that drugs presenting best value are selected where clinically appropriate. For further prescribing information including contraindications and cautions, please refer to the relevant drug monograph in the latest version of the British National Formulary or the respective drug's Summary of Product Characteristics.

The pathway is intended to be adopted by all acute provider Trusts within North East London.

Definitions

- a) **Very severe disease as per NICE eligibility criteria**
 - i. Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) score of 20 or more
 - ii. DLQI of ≥ 18
- b) **Severe disease as per NICE eligibility criteria**
 - i. Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) score of 10 or more
 - ii. DLQI of ≥ 10
- c) **Adequate response – severe or very severe psoriasis**
 - i. A 75% reduction in PASI score from baseline or
 - ii. 50% reduction in PASI score and a 5-point reduction in DLQI from start of treatment
 - iii. Measured at designated time point for each individual drug as outlined by NICE
- d) **Generalised pustular psoriasis as per NICE eligibility criteria for initiation**
 - i. Generalized Pustular Psoriasis Physician Global Assessment (GPPGA) total score is 3 or more (at least moderate), and
 - ii. there are fresh pustules (new appearance or worsening of existing pustules), and
 - iii. the GPPGA pustulation sub-score is at least 2 (at least mild), and
 - iv. at least 5% of the body's surface area is covered with erythema (abnormal redness of the skin or mucous membranes) and has pustules
- e) **Generalised pustular psoriasis – subsequent flares – as per NICE eligibility criteria**
 - i. a GPPGA pustulation subscore of 2 or more (at least mild), if the last flare was treated with spesolimab and resolved to a GPPGA pustulation subscore of 0 or 1 (clear or almost clear skin).

NICE Guidance and Technology Appraisals

At the time of publication, this treatment pathway considers the following NICE clinical guideline: CG153

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg153>

Table 1: NICE Technology Appraisals for Psoriasis and Pustular Psoriasis

NICE Technology Appraisal Number	Title
TA146	Adalimumab for the treatment of adults with psoriasis
TA419	Apremilast for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis
TA723	Bimekizumab for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis
TA511	Brodalumab for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis
TA574	Certolizumab pegol for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis
TA475	Dimethyl fumarate for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis
TA103	Etanercept and efalizumab for the treatment of adults with psoriasis
TA521	Guselkumab for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis
TA134	Infliximab for the treatment of adults with psoriasis
TA442	Ixekizumab for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis
TA596	Risankizumab for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis
TA350	Secukinumab for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis
TA575	Tildrakizumab for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis
TA180	Ustekinumab for the treatment of adults with moderate to severe psoriasis
TA907	Deucravacitinib for treating moderate to severe plaque psoriasis
TA1070	Spesolimab for treating generalised pustular psoriasis flares

At the time of publication, this treatment pathway considers the above NICE TAs

Definitions and Lines of therapy - Psoriasis

NICE do not state a definitive maximum number of lines of therapy in their guidance. Therefore, taking into consideration the presence of multiple drugs recommended by NICE, the number of lines of therapy has been based on the number of different mechanisms of action of the recommended drugs (Table 2).

The ICB has recognised and adopted the recommendation set out by the Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee (RMOC) which recommends switching to a high-cost drug with a new mechanism of action^[1].

The drugs are categorised into 6 mechanisms of action which are independent of each other, and therefore each patient will have access to a maximum of 6 lines of therapy. Clinicians may start a drug from each mechanism of action for a patient, as outlined in the table below. There may be instances where multiple drugs are chosen from one mechanism of action as this is more appropriate for the patient based on their clinical presentation. A maximum of 6 lines of therapy would still apply for these patients.

If the responsible clinician deems the patient could still benefit from further HCD treatment, funding will need to be requested via an Individual Funding Request (IFR) to the patient's ICB.

Taken from the NEL IFR policy *"In order to support an IFR on the basis of failure to respond to standard care, the IFR Panel would normally need to be satisfied that the patient's inability to respond to, or be provided with, the usual treatment was a genuinely exceptional circumstance, which lies outside the natural history of the condition and is not characteristic of the relevant group of patients with the condition"*.

The NICE committee considered that cost-effectiveness analyses for sequences should ideally be considered in decision making. But it acknowledged that there is no clinical data on sequential effectiveness and the clinical rationale for using various sequences of treatments would be personalised to each person. Therefore, the committee concluded that analysis of treatment sequences would be uncertain.

It is expected that this pathway will impart a cost pressure which is why a maximum of five lines of therapy has been chosen. However, in the context of initiatives to utilise best value-value medicines, there is opportunity to formalise cost-effective prescribing through the pathway.

Table 2: Mechanisms of action – chronic plaque psoriasis

Mechanism of inhibition/Action					
Anti-TNF	Anti IL12 / 23	IL17A	IL23	Small Molecule	TYK2 inhibitor
Adalimumab	Ustekinumab	Brodalumab	Guselkumab	Apremilast	Deuvracacitinib
Certolizumab		Ixekizumab	Risankizumab	Dimethyl fumarate	
Etanercept		Secukinumab	Tildrakizumab		
Infliximab		Bimekizumab			

Primary Failure

The patient's psoriasis does not demonstrate a response to therapy as outlined in the NICE TA.

Secondary Failure

The patient's psoriasis initially achieves a response to therapy which is subsequently not sustained, resulting in failure to maintain a response as outlined in the NICE TA.

Adverse Reaction

An adverse drug reaction will **not** count as a line of therapy if the patient has either:

- Experienced the adverse event **before reaching the initial response-assessment period** for that medication (e.g., 16 weeks for adalimumab), **or**
- Received the medication **beyond the initial assessment period** and has **demonstrated an adequate response** prior to the adverse reaction.

Treatment choice in pregnancy and breastfeeding

Patients planning a pregnancy or becoming pregnant whilst on this pathway taking a drug not compatible with their trimester of pregnancy or when breastfeeding can be switched to a different drug. Where more than one drug is suitable the most cost-effective treatment should be chosen. If a patient needs to switch drug due to confirmation of pregnancy or pre-conception, and the drug is used for a finite duration with a planned exit strategy, this will **not** count as a line of therapy.

[British Association of Dermatologists Guidelines for biologic therapy for psoriasis 2023 – a pragmatic update](#)

Funding

Trusts are required to obtain funding for the use of targeted therapies in the management of Psoriasis via Blueteq prior to starting therapy and for continuation of therapy as described on the Blueteq forms.

For generalised pustular psoriasis flares: Where treatment is provided in an acute setting and all relevant criteria are met, the Blueteq form may be completed and submitted as soon as practicably possible after the treatment has been supplied.

With a view to support data-driven care, commissioners will be extracting outcome data from Blueteq. Blueteq must therefore be used for the management of **all funding requests**. This includes recording treatment switches and cessation because of clinical review and/or remission and drug switching for patients who are confirmed or planning for pregnancy.

Where Blueteq is not currently in use by the Trust, an alternative mechanism for requesting funding and monitoring (e.g. clinical audit) will be agreed with commissioners.

Patients transferred from out of area or from overseas

For patients who have already commenced on their treatment for Psoriasis:

- If the current treatment is covered by a NICE TA, then the patient can continue their treatment as per the TA.
- If the treatment is not covered by a NICE TA, or this pathway, then an application to IFR must be submitted to continue the funding for therapy.

It is the responsibility of the specialist Dermatologist to ensure the patient's GP is informed that the patient is receiving treatment with a biologic. It will then be the responsibility of the GP to update a person's medical record with this biologic.

Dose escalation

For patients where there has been an inadequate response to treatment with adalimumab, dose escalation can be considered. Taking an anti-TNF level is recommended before starting dose escalation ^[4].

For patients where there has been an inadequate response to treatment with Secukinumab or Ustekinumab can also be considered.

The following table outlines the approved dose escalation for use across NEL by the North East London Formulary and Pathways group:

Table 3: Dose escalation

High-Cost Drug	Dose Escalation	Licensed Use	Notes
Adalimumab 40mg fortnightly	Adalimumab 40mg weekly for 12 weeks and review Or Adalimumab 80mg fortnightly for 12 weeks and review (needle phobic patients)	Yes	If adequate response is achieved with 40 mg every week or 80 mg every other week, the dosage may subsequently be reduced to 40 mg every other week, if considered clinically appropriate.
Secukinumab 300mg monthly	Secukinumab 300mg fortnightly (for patients > 90kg only) for 12 weeks and review	Yes	Each 300 mg dose is given as one subcutaneous injection of 300 mg or as two subcutaneous injections of 150 mg.
Ustekinumab 45mg 12 weeks or 90mg 12 weeks (if >100kg)	Ustekinumab up to 90mg every 12 weeks or 8 weeks (< 100kg) Or Up to 90mg 8 weeks (>100kg) for 24 weeks and review	No	

Generalised pustular psoriasis (GPP) flares in adults

There is currently only one NICE TA for GPP, TA1070 - Spesolimab for treating generalised pustular psoriasis flares. Patients should be treated in accordance with the criteria as set out in the TA.

Mechanism of inhibition/Action	
Interleukin-36 (IL-36) receptor inhibitor	Spesolimab solution for infusion

Appendix 1. Psoriasis Pathway

Psoriasis unresponsive/contraindicated/intolerant to standard therapy (e.g. methotrexate / Phototherapy)

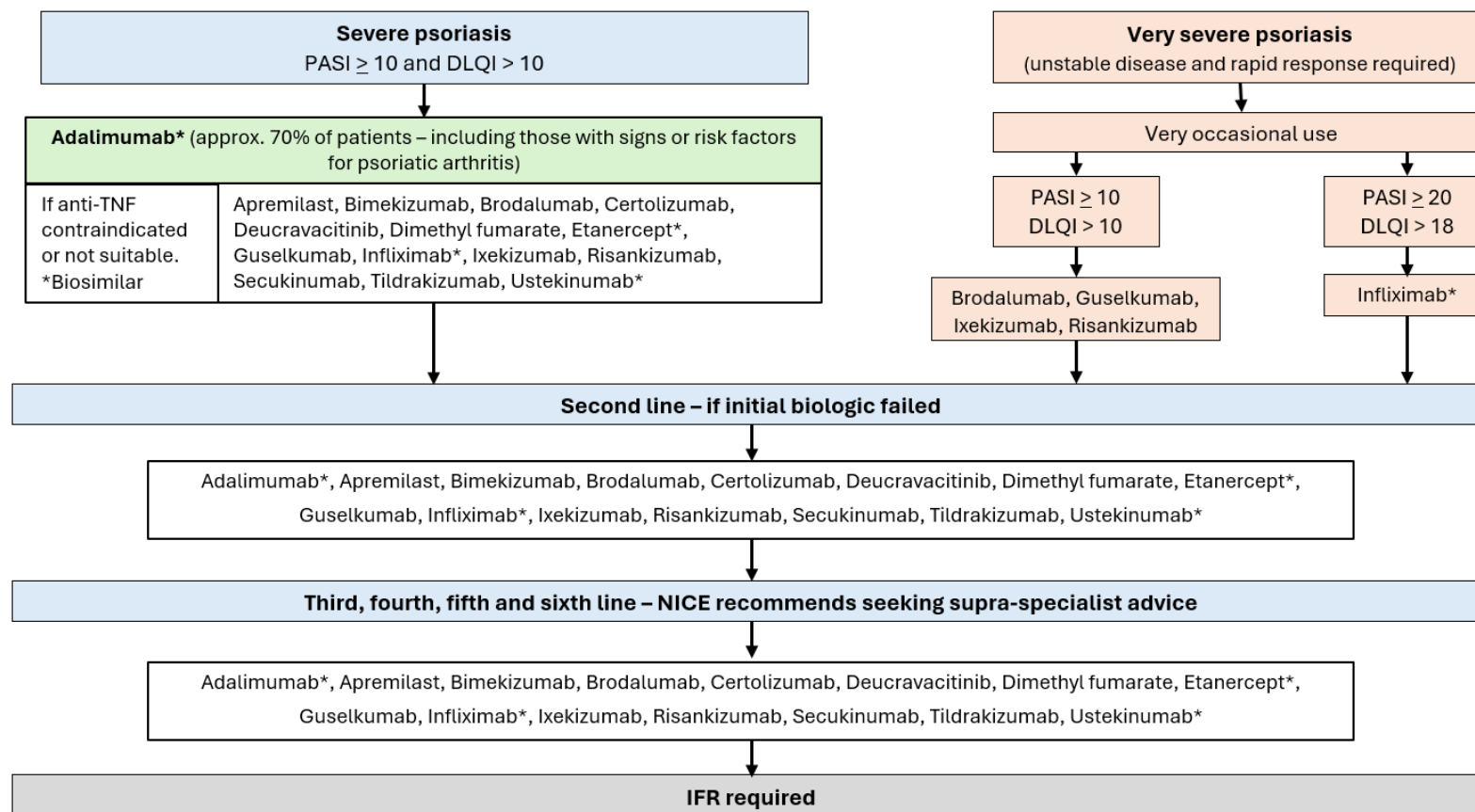
Clinical considerations

- Consider infection risk
- Tuberculosis:
 - TB Testing: if positive T-spot; assess for active TB and/or manage latent TB in consultation with a TB specialist. Avoid Anti-TNF medications until TB is successfully treated.
 - Untreated latent TB: Discuss with TB team. Evidence suggests no reactivation of untreated latent TB with IL23 inhibitors.
 - Active TB: Apremilast does not require TB screening and deemed to have a lower risk.
- Demyelinating disease – do not use anti-TNF
- Heart failure – avoid anti-TNF in NYHA stage III or IV HF
- High level of clearance required – Higher PASI 90 achieved with Brodalumab, Guselkumab, Ixekizumab and Risankizumab
- Conception – Certolizumab is safe to use in all stages of pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Adherence – Risankizumab and Ustekinumab are dosed at 12 weekly intervals, Brodalumab and Guselkumab 8 weekly interval.
- Adherence – Oral vs Injection consideration. Apremilast, Deucravacitinib and Dimethyl fumarate are given orally

Factors to consider when choosing appropriate drug

- Different efficacy and safety profiles of each drug
- Co-morbidities and potential impact of each drug option (benefit or harm), including drug specific contra-indications
- The persons view's and stated preference on administration route or frequency – discuss with decision aid
- Other relevant factors e.g., conception plans, adherence, travel

After consideration of all factors choose the most clinically suitable, best value drug (*biosimilar)



Appendix 2. Drug factors to consider (including modes of action)

The table below provides an approximate drug cost for each biologic based upon first year of therapy, with the loading dose schedule taken into consideration. The cost will vary depending upon commercial arrangements and access to short-term free of charge supplies, which has not been taken into consideration for this guidance.

Mode of Action	Drug Name	Indicated for	TA (other indications)	Reviewed within	Drug cost*
Anti-TNF α	Adalimumab biosimilar (subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) ≥ 10 and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and PUVA, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated	TA187 - Crohn's TA199 - Psoriatic arthritis TA195 - Rheumatoid arthritis TA329 - Ulcerative colitis TA373 - JIA TA375 - Rheumatoid arthritis TA383 - Ankylosing spondylitis and non-radiographic axial spondylitis TA392 - Hidradenitis suppurativa TA715 - Rheumatoid arthritis TA460 - Non-infectious uveitis	16 weeks	£
	Certolizumab (subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) ≥ 10 and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and phototherapy, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated	TA375 - Rheumatoid arthritis TA383 - Ankylosing spondylitis and non-radiographic axial spondylitis TA415 - Rheumatoid arthritis TA445 - Psoriatic arthritis	16 weeks	£££
	Etanercept (biosimilar) (subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) ≥ 10 and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and PUVA, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated	TA195 - Rheumatoid arthritis TA199 - Psoriatic arthritis TA373 - JIA TA375 - Rheumatoid arthritis TA383 - Ankylosing spondylitis and non-radiographic axial spondylitis TA715 - Rheumatoid arthritis	12 weeks	£
	Infliximab biosimilar (intravenous infusion or subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) ≥ 20 and (DLQI) > 18 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and PUVA, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated	TA163 - Ulcerative colitis (acute) TA187 - Crohn's TA195 - Rheumatoid arthritis TA199 - Psoriatic arthritis TA 329 - Ulcerative colitis TA375 - Rheumatoid arthritis TA383 - Ankylosing spondylitis and non-radiographic axial spondylitis TA715 - Rheumatoid arthritis	10 weeks	£
Small-molecule inhibitor of phosphodiesterase 4 (PDE4)	Apremilast (oral)	(PASI) ≥ 10 and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and PUVA,	TA443 - Psoriatic arthritis	16 weeks	£

Mode of Action	Drug Name	Indicated for	TA (other indications)	Reviewed within	Drug cost*
		<u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated			
Small molecule	Dimethyl fumarate (oral)	(PASI) ≥ 10 and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and PUVA, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated		16 weeks	£
IL17 inhibitor	Bimekizumab (subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) ≥ 10 and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and phototherapy, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated		16 weeks	££
	Brodalumab (subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) ≥ 10 and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and PUVA, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated		12 weeks	£££
	Ixekizumab (subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) $>$ and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments i.e., ciclosporin, methotrexate and PUVA, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated	TA537 – Psoriatic arthritis TA718 – Axial spondyloarthritis	12 weeks	££
	Secukinumab (subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) $>$ and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments i.e., ciclosporin, methotrexate and PUVA, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated	TA407 – Ankylosing spondyloarthritis TA445 – Psoriatic arthritis TA719 – Non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis	12 weeks	£££
IL-12 and IL-23 inhibitor	Ustekinumab (biosimilar - subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) $>$ and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and phototherapy,	TA340 – Psoriatic arthritis TA456 – Crohn's disease TA633 – Ulcerative colitis	16 weeks	££

Mode of Action	Drug Name	Indicated for	TA (other indications)	Reviewed within	Drug cost*
		<u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated			
IL-12 and IL-23 inhibitor	Ustekinumab (Originator - subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) > and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and phototherapy, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated	TA340 – Psoriatic arthritis TA456 – Crohn's disease TA633 – Ulcerative colitis	16 weeks	£££
IL-23 inhibitor	Guselkumab (subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) > and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and phototherapy, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated	TA815 - Psoriatic arthritis	16 weeks	££
	Risankizumab (subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) ≥ and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and phototherapy, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated	TA805 - Psoriatic arthritis TA888 – Crohn's disease	16 weeks	££
	Tildrakizumab (subcutaneous injection)	(PASI) ≥ and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and phototherapy, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated		12 to 28 weeks	££
TYK2 inhibitor	Deucravacitinib (oral)	(PASI) ≥ and (DLQI) > 10 <u>AND</u> Inadequate response to systemic treatments, including ciclosporin, methotrexate and phototherapy, <u>OR</u> systemic treatments are contraindicated or not tolerated		16 to 24 weeks	££

Generalised pustular psoriasis flares					
Mode of Action	Drug Name	Indicated for	TA (other indications)	Reviewed within	Drug cost*
IL-36 inhibitor	Spesolimab	Generalised pustular psoriasis flares only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPPGA >3 and there are fresh pustules and at least 5% of the body's surface area is covered with erythema 	None	8 days – re-treatment if required	N/A – only available treatment for this indication

**Prices are correct as of Sept 2025 and may be subject to change*