

This material was funded and developed in collaboration between UCB Pharma Ltd and University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust as part of a non-promotional Collaborative Working project.

## **Executive Summary**

### **The University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and UCB Pharma Limited, Rheumatology service optimisation collaborative project.**

#### **Collaborative Project Summary:**

This summary has been written by UCB Pharma Ltd with consultation and approval from the Collaborative project working team. The Rheumatology Pharmacist at University Hospitals Birmingham Foundation Trust (UHBFT) has identified an urgent need to review workload and resource capacity to optimise service delivery and improve patient experience. The current pharmacist-led service is under pressure due to limited staffing capacity for Rheumatology patient clinics.

The primary aim is to support the Collaborative Working Partner (CWP) University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust by providing pathway mapping support for service optimisation to:

1. Identify potential service inefficiencies and service bottlenecks. Optimisation of these by CWP will lead to improved standards of care, improve use and service productivity
2. To improve understanding of key operational standards and explore opportunities to improve pathways to support standard of care outcomes, such as reduction of urgent prescribing, reduction in missed doses and improve patient counselling

#### **Collaborative Project Summary:**

This collaborative project between University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and UCB Pharma Limited is designed to significantly enhance the overall quality of Rheumatology Pharmacist biologics pathway. By streamlining patient journeys from referral to treatment and ongoing monitoring, the project aims to remove existing barriers to specialised medicines and clinics, thereby providing a more seamless and positive service experience.

The Rheumatology Pathway Optimisation Project outlines benefits for patients, the NHS and UCB through improved resource utilisation; patient access, and service efficiency in rheumatology care. It also details key deliverables aimed at enhancing biologics pathways and an improved understanding of the workforce capacity requirement for service delivery. The desired outcome of this project is an improved pathway to deliver standard of care; achievement of the waiting list targets and a clear and standardised approach.

This summary has been written by UCB Pharma Ltd with consultation and approval from the Collaborative project working team.

#### **Project contribution:**

UCB Pharma: £5,000 covering agency support for Rheumatology service mapping

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust: These contributions are not direct monetary contributions and are a reflective of the estimated amount of hours ( in £ value) that will be required to implement the project. Clinical Workforce equivalency of £2,000.

The project commences in February 2026 and is a 12-month commitment to the hospital Trust.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities within the Rheumatology Service Optimisation Collaborative Working Project are clearly defined to ensure the effective delivery and sustainability of service improvements:

#### **University Hospitals Birmingham Foundation Trust (UHBFT) Rheumatology Service**

- Provide clinical leadership and operational oversight for the project, ensuring that service improvements are implemented safely and effectively.
- Lead on the delivery of patient-centred care, working collaboratively with partners to identify and address clinical priorities within the Rheumatology Service.
- Support the development of the business case for sustainable resource allocation, drawing on their expertise and knowledge of local service needs.
- Participate actively in governance meetings, contributing to risk management, compliance, and monitoring of project progress.
- Facilitate engagement with clinical and non-clinical staff, ensuring that feedback and insights from frontline teams inform ongoing improvements.

#### **UCB Pharma Ltd:**

- Collaborate in service optimisation initiatives, offering connection to other Pharmacists providing Rheumatology services
- Support resource allocation, including provision of relevant tools, training, and educational materials
- Contribute to risk management and mitigation planning, ensuring alignment with ABPI collaborative working guidance.
- Participate in governance arrangements, ensuring transparency and effective partnership working.
- Assist with the monitoring and evaluation process, helping to measure patient outcomes and service improvements.

Intended benefit:

For the patient	Improved Health Outcomes and Enhanced Patient Experience: Patients receive more timely and consistent communication regarding their appointments and treatment plan, leading to increased patient satisfaction. Patients gain improved access to specialised medicines and clinics, enhanced service experiences, and support from referral, through treatment and patient monitoring.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved access to specialised medicines and treatments.</li> <li>• Improving access to specialised clinics for patients with Rheumatology conditions</li> <li>• Enhancing services offered and improving the patients experience of these services</li> <li>• Supporting the service to monitor standards of care</li> <li>• Patient end to end support from referral to treatment and beyond.</li> </ul>
For the NHS	<p>Increased Service Efficiency and Capacity: Enhanced Data and Governance: Provides robust data for service evaluation, quality improvement cycles, and demonstrating the achievement of performance targets.</p> <p>Workforce Sustainability: Reduces the risk of burnout for the team by streamlining processes and providing a more manageable and efficient working environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved pathways that utilise the capacity and specialised clinical competencies</li> <li>• Efficiency in the functioning of the Rheumatology service</li> <li>• Efficiencies in utilising service resource capacity</li> <li>• Clinical care aligned with standards of care</li> <li>• Project should improve patient waiting times</li> </ul>
For UCB	<p>Case studies: Developing case studies from the learning of the implementation to share and spread best practice in Rheumatology services. Increased activity in patient cohort, understanding of how a specific patient pathways are delivered, linking standards of care to national and local guidance with an expected uplift of number of patients treated</p> <p>Strategic NHS Partnership: Builds a long-term, collaborative relationship between the UCB and the NHS, fostering future innovation and partnership opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding resource utilisation for service delivery in the NHS</li> <li>• Better understanding of the challenges faced by the NHS in delivering high-quality patient services and care</li> <li>• The anticipated rise in the use of biologic therapies is not a goal in itself, but rather a reflection of more patients being appropriately identified and supported as their conditions progress. The improved processes are designed to manage patient needs more effectively, without specifically aiming to increase therapy usage.</li> <li>• Showcase enhanced collaboration with partners and a strengthened organisational reputation</li> </ul>

It is anticipated that a report on the outcomes from this Collaborative working project will be published by June 2027

**For further information please contact:**

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Declaration

1. The project is in line with the ABPI code of practice
2. Does not constitute inducement to prescribe UCB Pharma products
3. The project has been approved by the NHS and UCB Pharma governance teams
4. The project will be published on the UCB Pharma transparency register.

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