

**AWMSG Secretariat Assessment Report – Limited submission****Buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone®) 2 mg/0.5 mg, 4 mg/1 mg, 8 mg/2 mg and 12 mg/3 mg sublingual film**

**Company:** Indivior UK Ltd.

**Licensed indication under consideration:** Substitution treatment for opioid drug dependence, within a framework of medical, social and psychological treatment. The intention of the naloxone component is to deter intravenous misuse. Suboxone® is indicated in adults and adolescents over 15 years of age who have agreed to be treated for addiction.

In accordance with NICE guidance such treatment should be considered in patients who are unsuitable for maintenance treatment with methadone.

**Date of licence extension:** 3 July 2020

**Comparator(s)**

- Buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone®) sublingual tablets
- Buprenorphine/naloxone (generic) sublingual tablets

**Limited submission details**

The limited submission criteria were met based on a new formulation of an existing medicine and anticipated usage in NHS Wales is considered to be of minimal budgetary impact.

**Clinical effectiveness**

- Buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone®) sublingual tablet has previously been recommended by the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) for restricted use within NHS Wales for the above indication.
- This limited submission covers the licence extension for a new formulation of buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone®); sublingual film. The company suggests that buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual film may result in improved patient adherence and retention rates, compared to the sublingual tablet. In addition, the company suggest the sublingual film may reduce the risk of diversion and misuse, and free up some healthcare professional time associated with supervised administration. The applicant company anticipate that buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual film will displace buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual tablet as second-line treatment in patients who are unsuitable for maintenance treatment with methadone.
- Based on pharmacokinetic data the Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) concluded that buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual film and tablet formulations deliver similar plasma concentrations at low doses but there are some differences at high doses. The Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) takes account of this by recommending monitoring the patient when switching



between dosage forms and adjusting the dose if appropriate. This approach is considered acceptable by CHMP.

- Studies show that the sublingual film dissolves on average 1–3 minutes earlier than the tablet. The company's submission also included a randomised controlled trial of sublingual buprenorphine/naloxone film versus sublingual tablets in the management of opioid dependence which showed that a single film adhered to a patient's mouth within 30 seconds, after which it could not be removed. The ability to wholly or partially remove the film has been shown to be related to the number of films dosed, with more patients able to remove the film when two films or more were dosed at the same time. To counteract removability of applied doses, CHMP recommend patients moisten their mouth prior to dosing and do not apply more than two films at once. In this study 61% of participants reported a preference for film compared to 16% who had a similar preference for either and 23% who reported a preference for the sublingual tablet.
- The safety profile of buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual tablets is well established and CHMP noted that the total number of subjects exposed to the buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual film during the clinical development is acceptable.
- A retrospective analysis based on US insurance claims demonstrated patients treated with the buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual film stayed longer on treatment, had more outpatient visits and had a 17% lower probability of hospital admission, leading to a 27% decrease in total healthcare costs compared to patients treated with the sublingual tablet. However, there are some limitations in the applicability to the Welsh population.

### Budget impact

- The company used Welsh Government data to estimate a prevalence of 3,382 people with opioid dependence. Of these 45% are unsuitable for methadone maintenance and 11% were estimated to be receiving buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual tablets. Assuming a discontinuation rate of 53% gave an equivalent of 79 people receiving the sublingual tablets per year. The sublingual film is assumed to displace the tablets over five years with 14 people receiving the sublingual film in Year 1, rising to 79 in Year 5 (allowing for discontinuations).
- The resulting net medicine acquisition cost of introducing buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual film in all these patients is estimated to be £1,566 in Year 1 increasing to £8,834 in Years 3–5 based on the list price.
- Based mainly on estimated reduced hospital admissions for patients treated with the sublingual film versus the sublingual tablet the company estimate net resource savings to be £5,590 in Year 1 increasing to £31,541 in Years 3–5. However, this is based mainly on the retrospective analysis of US insurance claims and there are limitations with the transferability of this evidence to the Welsh population.
- There is some uncertainty associated with the patient numbers presented by the applicant company. It is acknowledged that accurate patient numbers are difficult to estimate based on the information available. Whilst there are some limitations in the company's estimates it is anticipated that the budget impact will be minimal.

### Additional information

- AWTTTC is of the opinion that, if recommended, buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone®) for the indication under consideration may be appropriate for use within NHS Wales prescribed under specialist recommendation.

### Evidence search

**Date of evidence search:** 17 December 2020.

**Date of range of evidence search:** No date limits were applied to database searches.

### Further information

This assessment report will be considered for review every three years.

References are available on request. Please email AW TTC at [AWTTC@Wales.nhs.uk](mailto:AWTTC@Wales.nhs.uk) for further information.

This report should be cited as: All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre. AWMSG Secretariat Assessment Report. Buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone®) 2 mg/0.5 mg, 4 mg/1 mg, 8 mg/2 mg and 12 mg/3 mg sublingual film. Reference number: 4590. March 2021.