

**GUIDELINE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS ON ANTICOAGULANT
MEDICINES IN INPATIENT UNITS – CG83
Appendix 1 (October 2017)**

The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) Patient Safety Alert No 18 recommends the following actions that can make anticoagulant therapy safer, having identified that Anticoagulants are one of the classes of medicines most frequently identified as causing preventable harm and admission to hospital:

1. Ensure all staff caring for patients on anticoagulant therapy have the necessary work competences. Any gaps in competence must be addressed through training to ensure that all staff may undertake their duties safely.
2. Review and, where necessary, update written procedures and clinical protocols for anticoagulant services to ensure they reflect safe practice, and that staff are trained in these procedures.
3. Audit anticoagulant services using BSH/NPSA safety indicators as part of the annual medicines management audit programme. The audit results should inform local actions to improve the safe use of anticoagulants, and should be communicated to clinical governance, and drugs and therapeutics committees (or equivalent). This information should be used by commissioners and external organisations as part of the commissioning and performance management process.
4. Ensure that patients prescribed anticoagulants receive appropriate verbal and written information at the start of therapy, at hospital discharge, on the first anticoagulant clinic appointment, and when necessary throughout the course of their treatment. The BSH and the NPSA have updated the patient-held information (yellow) booklet.
5. Promote safe practice with prescribers and pharmacists to check that patients' blood clotting (International Normalised Ratio, INR) is being monitored regularly and that the INR level is safe before issuing or dispensing repeat prescriptions for oral anticoagulants.