

NCPE Assessment

Plain English Summary

July 2026

Drug name: Sodium zirconium cyclosilicate
(pronounced SOE-dee-um zir-KOE-nee-um SYE-kloe-SIL-i-kate) for the treatment of hyperkalaemia in adult patients*

Brand name: Lokelma®

HTA ID: 24039

* Reimbursement is sought for adult patients with serum potassium levels equal to or greater than 5.5mmol/L who have advanced chronic kidney disease (stage 3 to 5) and/or heart failure and are being treated with renin angiotensin aldosterone system inhibitors

What is the NCPE?

The National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics (NCPE) is a team of experts who look at the health benefits and costs of medicines. The HSE asks us to advise on whether or not a new medicine is good value for money. We give unbiased advice to help the HSE provide the most effective, safe and cost-effective (value for money) treatments for patients.

How do we make our recommendations?

Our main focus is on the health benefits and cost effectiveness of a medicine. We look at the wider costs and health benefits associated with a new medicine, for example:

- Does the new medicine work better than other treatments available in Ireland?
- Is the new medicine easier to give or easier to take compared with other treatments available in Ireland?
- Does the new medicine reduce the need for patients to be hospitalised?
- Does the new medicine improve the quality of a patient's life over other treatments available in Ireland?
- Will the new medicine save resources elsewhere within the health system?

We review the information from clinical trials along with the cost and value for money data presented by the pharmaceutical company. We ask doctors and other healthcare professionals for advice about any health benefits of the new medicine compared with current treatments. We also ask patient organisations to send us their views on how the new drug may improve patients' day-to-day experience of living with a disease.

What is sodium zirconium cyclosilicate used for?

Sodium zirconium cyclosilicate is a medicine used to treat hyperkalaemia (high levels of potassium in the blood). Normal serum potassium levels generally range from 3.5 to 5.0mmol/litre. In this case the pharmaceutical company is asking the HSE to fund the medicine for patients with potassium levels of equal to or greater than 5.5mmol/litre and advanced chronic kidney disease (stage 3 to 5) and/or heart failure and are being treated with certain medicines known as renin angiotensin aldosterone system inhibitors.

The pharmaceutical company is also asking the HSE to fund the medicine for patients receiving dialysis. These patients were not addressed in the company submission to the NCPE, and so are outside the scope of the NCPE recommendation.

What recommendation has the NCPE made to the HSE?

We have recommended that the HSE should consider not funding unless its cost effectiveness (value for money) can be improved. The HSE will consider our recommendation and make the final decision about reimbursement (funding). When making the funding decision, the HSE will also consider the additional [criteria](#) outlined in the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013.

Why did we make this recommendation?

After reviewing the data presented by the pharmaceutical company, we recommend that the HSE consider not providing this medicine unless the HSE can agree a suitable price reduction with the pharmaceutical company. This is because we believe the medicine may work better than other ways to manage this condition. However, expenditure on this medicine is expected to be high and it is very unclear whether this medicine is value for money.

Next steps

When the HSE receives our recommendation, it will look at all the relevant data about sodium zirconium cyclosilicate. The HSE makes the final decision on reimbursement.

Where can I get more information?

You can get more information about sodium zirconium cyclosilicate from the following online options:

- the NCPE Technical Summary Document
- Sodium zirconium cyclosilicate European Public Assessment Report (EPAR) – [Summary for the public](#) or
- searching for sodium zirconium cyclosilicate on our website (www.ncpe.ie);

- searching for sodium zirconium cyclosilicate on the European Medicines Agency (EMA) website (www.ema.europa.eu).

Please refer to the NCPE website for updated information on the reimbursement status of this medicine.