NHS Lanarkshire
Antimicrobial Management Team

To: All Prescribers –Acute Hospitals and Primary Care, NHS Lanarkshire.

From: The Antimicrobial Management Team

Date: April 2019

Subject: **Safety Update on Fluoroquinolone Antibiotics: Ciprofloxacin, Levofloxacin, Moxifloxacin, Ofloxacin**

MHRA advice cites new restrictions/precautions in response to **very rare** reports of **disabling, potentially long lasting or irreversible** side effects of FQ antibiotics.

Serious FQ side effects include tendonitis, tendon rupture, arthralgia, pain in extremities, gait disturbance, neuropathies associated with paraesthesia, depression, fatigue, memory impairment, sleep disorders, and impaired hearing, vision, taste, and smell.

Tendon damage (especially to the Achilles tendon but also other tendons) can occur within 48 hours but onset may be delayed several months after stopping treatment.

At the first sign of tendonitis (eg, painful swelling, inflammation), FQ must be discontinued and alternative treatment considered. Affected limb(s) should be appropriately treated (i.e. immobilization) and corticosteroids must not be used if signs of tendinopathy occur.

Due to their broad spectrum of activity, FQ antibiotics are associated with an increased risk of *Clostridium difficile* infection. Systemic and inhaled FQ's may also be associated with a small increased risk of aortic aneurysm and dissection, particularly in older patients.

Key actions for Prescribers

1. **Only prescribe** FQ antibiotics for **serious severe infection**

   - See MEDED link for NHSL acute and primary care antimicrobial guidance

2. **Safety Net:** Risk assess all patients and consider alternatives before prescribing any FQ – especially in high risk groups i.e. patients > 60, renal impairment, solid-organ transplantation, concurrent corticosteroids

   - See recent Drug Safety Update for full detail of FQ associated ADR risks

3. **Patient Consent**: Ensure all patients prescribed a FQ are fully aware of potential warning signs of FQ associated serious adverse drug reactions and understand they should discontinue immediately and seek further medical advice should any occur.

   - See MHRA sheet to discuss measures with patients to support shared decision making