



Issue 5: Working together to minimise the impact of medicines shortages

Key issues:

- Working together with understanding and good communication will help minimise the impact of medicines shortages for patients, pharmacies and GP practices.
- Medicines supply issues are a growing national problem and affect all sectors of the ICS (Integrated Care System) and lead to frustration and concern to patients.
- Shortages are caused by factors such as manufacturing problems and global market share.
- Pharmacies are spending a lot of time sourcing medicines, sometimes having to contact multiple wholesalers which is not always easy since the stock situation changes rapidly, <u>sometimes within hours</u>.
- GP practices also spend a lot of time having to change prescriptions, often without knowing what alternatives
 are available.
- ICB Prescribing budgets are under pressure as the price of medicines increase.

Community pharmacy:

- Inform prescribers of potential alternatives that are available. The **HW Drug Formulary** can help to identify first and second line choices.
- Ask the GP practice for an alternative phone number to avoid using patient lines and/ or arrange a set time of day when a prescriber is available for queries.
- Liaise with nearby pharmacies to advise patients where a pharmacy has stock
- Make use of current **Serious Shortage Protocols**.
- Use a patient information leaflet to explain shortages <u>here.</u>
- Limited availability can lead to significantly inflated prices. Report pricing concerns to Community pharmacy England.
- Use in pharmacy messaging the HW ICB Your prescription 7 day from ordering to collection resource
- Encourage patients to order medicines in good time using the NHS App NHS Digital

GP practices:

- Prescribe generically where appropriate- this allows pharmacies to dispense any available brand
- Use 28 day prescribing whenever possible prescribing for longer periods can exacerbate supply issues. **Do not change the prescription interval**
- Arrange a set time of day when local community pharmacy can bring issues and/ or give them an alternative phone number to avoid using patient lines. Review changes to prescriptions when stocks are available again.
- Use patient information leaflet to explain shortages here.
- Consider allowing 7 days before a prescription is due to run out to give time for processing and stock location.
- Encourage patients to order their repeat medicines via the NHS App guidance for GP practices NHS Digital in good time
- Note that the NHS Delivery Plan encourages pharmacies to use "hub and spoke" models to help manage their workload which can add to lead times.
- Display prominently and use in practice via different means of messaging to patients the HW ICB <u>7 day from ordering to collection</u> resource

Healthcare Professional (HCP) Information



<u>Specialist Pharmacy Service Medicines</u> Supply Tool

List of known, enduring shortages - does not cover all short term problems (anyone with nhs.net email can register)



Community Pharmacy England Serious Shortage Protocols

Allows pharmacists to switch certain products without referring patients back to the prescriber.



HW Drug Formulary
Useful to identify formulary alternatives



NHS Service Finder

For health and care professionals - accurate, real-time information to help signpost patients to available services. Includes non-public contact details.





Patient Information

<u>Community Pharmacy England Medicines Factsheet - Information on medicines supply</u> for patients

Pharmacies could email the Pharmacy to GP Communication Form available on <u>GP TeamNet</u> as below:



Pharmacy to GP Practice Form Version

This form can be used where non – urgent requests for changes to a prescription detail can be made to the practice through an agreed email route.

Information on EPS can be found here with care not to direct prescriptions NHS Digital - Medicines Supply Issues and the use of EPS

Suggested managing expected & unexpected out of stock situations (OOS)

Unexpected OOS	Unexpected OOS	Expected OOS
Script issued to normal pharmacy on script with other medication	Script issued to normal pharmacy on individual script	Item is considered to be in short supply. Item should be issued on single script. Script validity is 28 days for a controlled drug and six months for others
Pharmacy dispenses other items but cannot fufill remaining item within required timeframe	Pharmacy cannot obtain stock within required time-frame. Pharmacy returns script to spine and gives patient token code or print out to try in other pharmacy	Issue EPS token to spine (not direct to nominated pharmacy) and give patient print out or token code/nhs number so that supplying pharmacy can pull it down.
Pharmacy marks item as 'ND' and claims script. Undispensed item is not chargeable. Pharmacy communicates this to surgery indicating system availability and alternative if required	Patient unable to obtain stock elsewhere. Script is returned to spine and can be cancelled by surgery. Pharmacy communicates this to surgery indicating system availability and alternative if required	Patient to try pharmacies to see if any pharmacy can obtain their out of stock item. If they have no success with this they should contact their regular pharmacy who will email surgery to designated email address to request an available alternative if applicable.
Surgery reissue item on individual token for patient to try other pharmacy OR Surgery issues alternative Rx	Surgery issues alternative Rx	Surgery issues alternative drug