

Dear Colleague

## EXTENSION TO SERIOUS SHORTAGE PROTOCOL (SSP) ISSUED FOR ESTRADOT® (ESTRADIOL HEMIHYDRATE) 100 MICROGRAM PATCHES

### Purpose

1. This Circular advises NHS Boards and community pharmacy contractors that the UK-wide active Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) for Estradot® (estradiol hemihydrate) 100 microgram patches, a hormone replacement therapy (HRT) product, due to expire on 3 November 2023, has now been extended until Friday 1 December 2023.
2. The extension is applicable to [SSP057](#) which allows community pharmacists to substitute Estradot® 100 microgram patches, with the same quantity of Evorel® 100 microgram or Estraderm MX® 100 microgram patches, for eligible patients. Pharmacists are advised to review and familiarise themselves with the new end date.

### Background

3. To assist in alleviating current issues with medicines availability, various UK-wide SSPs have been issued by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), in consultation with the Scottish Government. An SSP is an additional tool to manage and mitigate medication shortages for prescribing clinicians, community pharmacies and importantly patients.
4. Each SSP is individually developed and authorised clinically, to enable community pharmacists and dispensing doctors to dispense a different strength or formulation or alternative medicine or appliances in accordance with the protocol, rather than having to refer prescribing decisions back to the original prescriber. These protocols are time limited.

3 November 2023

### Addresses

#### For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards  
Director Practitioner Services,  
NHS NSS

#### For information

Directors of Pharmacy  
NHS Medical Directors

### Enquiries to:

Pharmacy Team  
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EH1 3DG

Email:

[PharmacyTeam@gov.scot](mailto:PharmacyTeam@gov.scot)

[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

5. Community pharmacists are expected to use their professional skill and judgement to decide whether it is reasonable and appropriate to substitute a person's prescribed medicine using the SSP. The person will also have to agree to the alternative supply.
6. The DHSC frequently reviews which medicines should be under an SSP and for how long they need to be in place.
7. Any amendments or extensions to existing SSPs are documented on the NHS Business Services Authority website using the following link: [Serious shortage protocols \(SSPs\) | NHSBSA](#).

### **Enquiries**

8. For any queries on the details of this circular, please contact the Scottish Government Pharmacy Team at [PharmacyTeam@gov.scot](mailto:PharmacyTeam@gov.scot).

### **Action**

9. **Health Boards are asked to note the contents of this Circular and to bring it to the attention of community pharmacy contractors on their Pharmaceutical Lists and Area Pharmaceutical Committees. This Circular should also be brought to the attention of General Practices.**

Yours sincerely



**Alison Strath**  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer