

**Dear Colleague** 

## EXTENSION TO SERIOUS SHORTAGE PROTOCOL (SSP) FOR CLARITHROMYCIN 125MG/5ML ORAL SUSPENSION

### Purpose

- 1. This Circular advises NHS Boards and community pharmacy contractors that the <u>UK-wide</u> Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) for Clarithromycin 125mg/5ml oral suspension, an antibiotic product, due to expire on 15 December 2023 has now been extended until Friday 12 January 2024.
- 2. The extension is applicable to <u>SSP053</u> which allows community pharmacists to substitute this product with Clarithromycin 250mg/5ml oral suspension.
- 3. Community Pharmacists are advised to review and familiarise themselves with the new end date for the noted SSP.

# Background

- 4. To assist in alleviating current supply 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.
- 5. 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.

#### 15 December 2023

#### Addresses

<u>For action</u> Chief Executives, NHS Boards Director Practitioner Services, NHS NSS

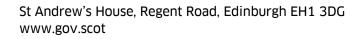
For information Directors of Pharmacy NHS Medical Directors

#### Enquiries to:

Pharmacy Team 1<sup>st</sup> Floor East Rear St Andrew's House EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

Email: PharmacyTeam@gov.scot

www.gov.scot





- 6. 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.
- 7. The DHSC frequently reviews which medicines should be under an SSP and for how long they need to be in place.
- 8. Any amendments or extensions to existing SSPs are documented on the NHS Business Services Authority website using the following link: <u>Serious shortage protocols (SSPs) | NHSBSA.</u>

## Enquiries

9. For any queries on the details of this circular, please contact the Scottish Government Pharmacy Team at <u>PharmacyTeam@gov.scot</u>.

## Action

10. 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

