

## CLASSIFICATION OF MEDICINE SHORTAGES

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL RESPONSES
Level one (low impact)	Supply problem with a short duration ( <b>up to one month</b> ) where <u>immediately available measures are expected to be sufficient</u> and there is minimal additional management requirement.	Business as usual. Response likely to involve using the same medicine. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative strength/formulation available to meet demand, potentially from other suppliers.</li> </ul>
Level two (medium impact)	Supply problem where <u>alternatives in the same therapeutic class are available but which may require some management such as switching to those alternatives, which may include unlicensed medicines.</u>	Business as usual. Response not likely to require a change in the class of medicine. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative strength/formulation available but clinical advice is required to help manage the switch.</li> <li>Alternative medicine in the same therapeutic class.</li> <li>Unlicensed alternatives may be used.</li> <li>Issuing a Medicine Supply Alert Notice.</li> </ul>
Level three (high impact)	Supply problems where there are <u>limited or no alternatives in the same therapeutic class and which require significant management</u> , potentially including changes in clinical practice or operational direction or that have patient safety implications.  Level three shortages also include level two shortages for medicines used in <u>life saving conditions</u> such as anaphylaxis or involving <u>patient groups considered as vulnerable</u> , such as neonates, paediatrics or people with learning disabilities.	Serious shortage situation. Response likely to require a change in the class of medicine. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative therapeutic class of medicine available.</li> <li>The use of a 'serious shortage protocol'.</li> <li>Additional clinical advice.</li> <li>Exceptional MHRA regulatory measures.</li> <li>Issuing a Medicine Supply Alert Notice.</li> </ul>
Level four (critical impact)	Supply problems where there is <u>no viable therapeutic alternative</u> and where responses may also require support from outside the health system and / or which trigger the use of national resilience structures.	Very serious shortage situation. Wider burden on NHS and public sector. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-medicine support provided to patients.</li> <li>National Resilience procedures potentially activated – including links with agencies outside NHS. Additional project management or communications support may be required.</li> <li>Issuing a Medicine Supply Alert Notice.</li> </ul>