

Dear Colleague

Amendments to Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) for Phenoxymethylpenicillin products and reactivation of the SSP for Estraderm MX[®] 100mcg patches

Purpose

1. This Circular advises NHS Boards and community pharmacy contractors that five of the UK-wide Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) for Phenoxymethylpenicillin products that were issued on 16 December (SSPs 043-047) have been amended to allow pharmacists to supply azithromycin as a further alternative antibiotic. The expiry date for the amended SSPs still remains the 31 January 2023.
2. Community pharmacists are advised to review and familiarise themselves with the amended SSPs. Please refer to Annex A for a detailed list of all 5 SSPs which have been amended.
3. In addition, the SSP for the hormone replacement therapy (HRT) product Estraderm MX[®] 100mcg patches ([SSP 036](#)), which originally issued as [PCA\(P\)\(2022\)29](#), was reactivated on 23 December 2022. The expiry date for the reactivated SSP is 13 January 2023.

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.

28 December 2022

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards
Director Practitioner Services,
NHS NSS

For information

Directors of Pharmacy
NHS Medical Directors

Enquiries to:

Pharmacy Team
1st 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: [Serious shortage protocols \(SSPs\) | NHSBSA](#).

Enquiries

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

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

List of Amended Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) for Phenoxyethylpenicillin products

SSP Number	Affected Product	Links to the amended SSPs	Additional eligible products to supply	Relates to PCA(P) (2022) circular
043	Phenoxyethylpenicillin 125mg/5ml oral solution	SSP043 Phenoxyethylpenicillin 125-5ml oral solution final v11.pdf (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)	Azithromycin 200mg/5ml oral suspension Azithromycin 250mg tablets Azithromycin 500mg tablets Azithromycin 250mg capsules	PCA(P)(2022) 38
044	Phenoxyethylpenicillin 125mg/5ml oral solution sugar free	SSP044 Phenoxyethylpenicillin 125-5ml oral solution SF final v11.pdf (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)	Azithromycin 200mg/5ml oral suspension Azithromycin 250mg tablets Azithromycin 500mg tablets Azithromycin 250mg capsules	PCA(P)(2022) 39
045	Phenoxyethylpenicillin 250mg/5ml oral solution	SSP045 Phenoxyethylpenicillin 250mg-5ml oral solution final v11.pdf (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)	Azithromycin 200mg/5ml oral suspension Azithromycin 250mg tablets Azithromycin 500mg tablets Azithromycin 250mg capsules	PCA(P)(2022) 40
046	Phenoxyethylpenicillin 250mg/5ml oral solution sugar free	SSP046 Phenoxyethylpenicillin 250mg-5ml oral solution SF final v11.pdf (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)	Azithromycin 200mg/5ml oral suspension Azithromycin 250mg tablets Azithromycin 500mg tablets Azithromycin 250mg capsules	PCA(P)(2022) 41

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SSP Number	Affected Product	Links to the amended SSPs	Additional eligible products to supply	Relates to PCA(P) (2022) circular
047	Phenoxymethylpenicillin 250mg tablets	SSP047 Phenoxymethylpenicillin 250mg tablets final v11.pdf (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)	<p>Azithromycin 200mg/5ml oral suspension</p> <p>Azithromycin 250mg tablets</p> <p>Azithromycin 500mg tablets</p> <p>Azithromycin 250mg capsules</p>	PCA(P)(2022) 42