

Derbyshire Medicines in Short Supply Code of Practice

Guiding Principles:

- Out of stocks cause extra work for pharmacies and practices, and can have detrimental effects for patients.
- Every effort needs to be made to ensure that medications are supplied as intended by the originating prescriber.
- Delays in obtaining medications and/or unplanned changes can result in confusion, adverse reactions, and worsening of the patient's condition.
- Despite the complexity of the situation most pharmacies work hard to maintain their contractual obligation to supply prescribed medication using a systematic and diligent approach in a timely manner
- Due to time constraints in the system, pharmacists and GPs should minimise unnecessary conversations when the medication could be supplied as ordered.
- GP practices and pharmacies should use appropriate contact, to strengthen their professional relationship.

Pharmacies should:

1. Take all reasonable steps to obtain the medication as prescribed which could include (not exhaustive): trying other local pharmacies, trying other branches (if applicable) of their own chain to try and source supply; telephoning wholesalers and/or manufacturers to try and obtain stock.
2. Ascertain with the patient how much stock they have at home, and only contact the prescriber if unable to source stock before the patient runs out of medication. This might be an opportunity to review patient compliance.
3. Provide the GP practice with information about what possible Derbyshire-approved alternatives they can obtain. (<http://www.derbyshiremedicinesmanagement.nhs.uk/home>)
4. Cancel, or otherwise suitably endorse any non- or part- supply of medication. Return to the spine any EPS (Electronic Prescription Service) prescriptions not dispensed.
5. Inform the PSNC through their website of any situation where they are unable to obtain stock at or below drug tariff price (<http://psnc.org.uk/dispensing-supply/supply-chain/generic-shortages/>).
6. For long-standing issues, if changes are made to repeats, inform the GP practice when stock becomes available.
7. Use Serious Shortage Protocols is available: <https://psnc.org.uk/dispensing-supply/supply-chain/live-ssps/>

GP Practices should:

1. Supply a specific email address or telephone number to pharmacies to be used as a point of contact.
2. Ensure staff are fully briefed to help pharmacies and patients when prescriptions cannot be filled as prescribed.
3. Ensure that they provide access to an appropriate healthcare professional in a timely manner to ensure that the patient receives a suitable Derbyshire approved alternative as soon as possible.
4. Where necessary, issue a new prescription and send it (either by pharmacy collection or EPS) to the dispensing pharmacy.
5. Check Central Alerting System which is used to convey urgent supply disruption messages.

Patients should:

1. Inform the pharmacy or GP practice if they are not taking their medications as prescribed.
2. Be prepared to give the pharmacist and/or GP practices exact quantities of medications at home.
3. Be flexible to obtain prescriptions from other pharmacies if that is the only way of obtaining their medications as prescribed by the GP.

Notes

- Good communication between community pharmacy and GP practice staff can help minimise any potential problems
- The Medicines Management Teams at Derby and Derbyshire CCG may be able to help resolve any issues by giving advice on preferred formulary choices and suggesting suitable alternatives.
- By exception, the Medicines Management Teams will, if necessary, escalate the issue to the Area Prescribing Committee or Prescribing Sub-group to consider temporary changes to the formulary.
- Updates may be available on the SPS website: <https://www.sps.nhs.uk/category/shortages-discontinuations-and-expiries/> or MiMs <https://www.mims.co.uk/drug-shortages-live-tracker/article/1581516>