NHS Frimley

Out of Stock Medicines Guidance for Primary Care

- This document provides guidance to primary care when notified of a medicine supply shortage via the following routes: Medicines Supply Notification (MSN), Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP), patient, or a community pharmacy.
- Links to Serious Shortage Protocols, the SPS Medicines Supply Tool and local resources may be found on the Frimley ICB website, on the supply problems page.

Receipt of MSN/ SSP

- Upon receiving a Medicines Supply Notification (MSN) or Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP), review and circulate it within the practice.
- Assess whether the shortage is long-term or short-term.
- Contact the local pharmacies to discuss alternatives; a WhatsApp group with local pharmacies and PCN pharmacists is recommended.
- Consider issuing a separate non-nominated prescription for that item. This may allow the usual nominated pharmacy to supply items that are in stock.

Patient query

- When a patient returns to the practice requesting an alternative medicine due to their regular medication being out of stock in the pharmacy
- Consult your practice team (PCN pharmacist, PCN HUB, or prescription clerk) who may already be aware of the shortage and have a solution.
- Use the SPS website to check if the shortage is a known issue and if so, prescribe an alternative product as per the national guidance.
- If the shortage is not a known issue, advise the patient to try an alternative pharmacy or contact the community pharmacy or Medicines Optimisation Team for advice.
- Consider issuing the alternative medication as a non-nominated prescription.

Pharmacy query

- When a pharmacy contacts the practice requesting an alternative prescription
- Ask the pharmacy to suggest an alternative medication that is in stock or available to order
- Ask your PCN pharmacist, PCN HUB, or prescription clerk, who should have access to a WhatsApp group to find out if other pharmacies have the medication in stock.
- Where there is stock available at other pharmacies, the pharmacy should return the prescription to the Spine so that the patient can go to an alternative pharmacy (this is only an option for single-item prescriptions, otherwise issue the alternative medication as a non-nominated prescription)
- Use the SPS website to check if the shortage is a known issue and if so, prescribe an alternative product as per the national guidance otherwise contact the Medicines Optimisation Team for advice.

Produced by Frimley Medicines Optimisation Group November 2023
Approved by Frimley Health and Care ICS Medicines Optimisation Board November 2023
Review date November 2025