

Generics Supply Situation

PSNC is in urgent discussions with the Department of Health about the current supply issues and is seeking immediate action to offer relief for community pharmacy contractors.



Following inspections at Bristol Laboratories and Dr Reddy's, PSNC is aware of the very great difficulties that contractors are having sourcing a large number of products, with both shortage and pricing issues playing a part. This is having a huge impact on workload and a catastrophic impact on cashflow.

PSNC has written to the pharmacy minister, Steve Brine MP, seeking urgent intervention to offer some relief for contractors as the major shortage and pricing issues persist. We have stressed our concern for the ability of some pharmacists to survive the cashflow crisis, and warned of the disastrous impact this could have on patients and other NHS services as we go into the winter period. PSNC is also continuing to stress to the Department of Health the seriousness of the current situation.

In September an extraordinary number of price concessions were granted. PSNC was particularly concerned by the length of time it took to reach agreement on many of the concession prices and have made our concerns known to the Department.

We are also now extremely worried about contractors' ability to manage the cashflow crisis through November, when the full

impact of August's Category M price reductions will be felt. More information about this is available on page 4.

Please do continue to report generic issues using the generic shortages form which can be found at psnc.org.uk/feedback. These reports form a very important basis on which price concessions are agreed and we would like to thank those contractors who have already taken the time to fill in the form.

As always, as soon as any price concessions are agreed, the website will be updated and an email alert will be sent to all of our email newsletter subscribers. To sign up to the newsletter, please visit psnc.org.uk/newsletter

PSNC Member and independent community pharmacy contractor Mark Burdon said:

"Like all community pharmacy contractors, those of us on PSNC are deeply frustrated and alarmed by the current medicines supply situation. PSNC is seeking recognition from the Department of these cashflow problems and the fact that this is having a serious impact on all of our abilities to deliver medicines to patients."

Reporting generic shortages

PSNC's Dispensing and Supply Team relies on your reports to negotiate price concessions for generic products that cannot be obtained at Drug Tariff price, but we are aware that as the list of issues grows it becomes more time-consuming to submit these reports to us.

Pharmacy F-code/ODS code *

I do not know my pharmacy F-code/ODS code

Click here if you do not know your pharmacy F-code/ODS code

Name of generic product *

Strength of the generic product *

Form of the generic product *

Tablets

Have you been able to obtain this product? *

Yes No

We have therefore streamlined our reporting system on our website to try and make it easier for community pharmacy contractors and their teams to report generic pricing issues. You are now able to report multiple lines to us in one spreadsheet by clicking on the 'Click here to report multiple generic pricing issues/shortages' button on our 'Problems obtaining a generic medicine?' page (psnc.org.uk/genericreport), rather than having to fill out individual forms for individual products. All spreadsheets should be emailed to medicines.shortages@psnc.org.uk.

Our single item reporting form has also been simplified. The form will now only ask you to enter the pharmacy's F-code/ODS code (or the pharmacy name and postcode if the F-code is not known), rather than requiring you to fill in all the pharmacy's address details.

Price concession FAQs

1. How long does a concession last?

If a price concession or NCSO is granted, it is only valid until the end of the month in which it was granted. PSNC needs to apply/re-apply for concessions on a monthly basis. If there is an on-going supply problem, it is possible that a new concession will be granted by the Department of Health the following month; however, this is not guaranteed.

2. If a medicine is granted a price concession or NCSO, are all strengths of the product covered by the price concession or NCSO?

No, concessions are granted to specific strengths of a product so contractors must check the latest list so they know which strengths have been granted a concession.

For more information please call 0203 1220 810 or email info@psnc.org.uk

Alliance Healthcare distribution issues

Community pharmacies across the country were left struggling to source vital medicines for their patients in the wake of severe disruption last month.



When Alliance Healthcare experienced a server failure on 7th September, this led to severe disruption of its deliveries to community pharmacies.

This disruption left pharmacies facing major problems sourcing supplies to meet patients' needs. This has raised fresh concerns over Direct to Pharmacy arrangements as pharmacies were left struggling to secure medicines only distributed through Alliance.

PSNC has subsequently raised concerns about restricted distribution arrangements.



PSNC Chief Executive Sue Sharpe said:

"PSNC was very concerned about the impact that the problems at Alliance Healthcare had on community pharmacies. We know how much harder many community pharmacy teams had to work to ensure that patients had access to the medicines they needed; and of course this came at a time when pharmacies are already under immense pressure. Only the hard work and extraordinary efforts of pharmacies prevented this closure leading to a catastrophic impact on the NHS caused by many thousands of patients being unable to get the medicines they needed.

PSNC is and has always been very concerned about Direct to Pharmacy arrangements involving a sole supplier of any given medicine to pharmacies. The reliance on a single supplier exacerbates the risks for pharmacies and makes it more likely that any supply problems will leave them unable to meet patients' needs. When these arrangements first began a few years ago we opposed them. We have continued to monitor the situation since then and after the problems last month we have again escalated the issue with the Department of Health.

PSNC remains of the view that a wholesale market which promotes competition and allows pharmacies to choose from a number of medicines suppliers is the best way to ensure that we retain a resilient medicines supply chain and that community pharmacies can continue to provide patients with the medicines they need, when they need them. We will do all that we can to promote this."



PSNC Committee Member and independent contractor Gary Warner commented:

"This sort of supply issue has been our fear for years. My experience is just one example from thousands like it up and down the country. We received our delivery from Alliance Healthcare as normal on the Thursday morning [7th September], but then had no deliveries until the following week.

The lack of clarity about how long we would be without deliveries made conversations with patients difficult, and as the situation unfolded most of our information came from our delivery driver. By the Saturday we were running out of the lower volume lines and had to start locating stock from other pharmacies to ensure that patients did not go without urgent medicines. Others were also struggling, as we had to lend as much stock as we borrowed.

Once again it felt like the network of community pharmacies pulling together to cover for failures elsewhere and to ensure that patients' needs continued to be met.

It won't have escaped anyone's notice that the solus lines were the most badly affected, and of course that would make sense. At PSNC we have long been concerned about Direct to Pharmacy medicines supply arrangements involving a single supplier. Investigations may have found that restricted distribution arrangements are not unlawful, but if they start to seriously affect patients' access to medicines then I believe the Department has a responsibility to act."

Endorsement notice: Belladonna plaster

In August, Belladonna adhesive plasters BP 1980 19cm x 12.5cm & 28cm x 17.5cm were deleted from the appliance section of the Drug Tariff, but a licensed medicine is now available instead.

The new licensed product is called **Belladonna medicated plaster 28cm x 17.5cm & 9.5cm x 12.5cm**, but it is not listed in the Drug Tariff, so to be reimbursed correctly please ensure that prescriptions are endorsed as follows.

Required endorsement:

- Brand name or manufacturer/supplier; and
- Pack size — where there are multiple pack sizes available.

Patient safety report resource published

The Community Pharmacy Patient Safety Group and PSNC have published a new resource, **Completion of the patient safety report quality criterion**, to assist community pharmacy contractors to meet this quality criterion of the Quality Payments Scheme. The resource explains how contractors can use the monthly and annual template patient safety reports to meet the quality criterion and lists questions and examples which pharmacy teams can consider to help them complete the report. Access the resource from: ow.ly/8DW730FW2w2

Drug Tariff Watch

The Preface lists additions, deletions and alterations to the Drug Tariff. Below is a quick summary of the changes due to take place from **1st November 2017**.

KEY:

- SC** Special container
- R** Item requiring reconstitution
- *** This pack only (others already available)

Part VIII A additions

Category A:

- Cyproterone 50mg tablets (56)
- Formaldehyde (Buffered) 4% solution (1000ml)
- Galantamine 20mg/5ml oral solution sugar free **SC** (100ml)
- Midazolam 50mg/10ml solution for injection ampoules (10)
- Octreotide 500micrograms/1ml solution for injection pre-filled syringes (5)

Category C:

- Arnica montana gel **SC** (100ml) – *Atrogel Arnica*
- Arnica montana gel **SC** (50ml) – *Atrogel Arnica*
- Calcium carbonate 500mg chewable tablets (48) – *Rennie Orange*
- Capsicum tincture (500ml) – *JM Loveridge Ltd*
- Escitalopram 20mg/ml oral drops sugar free **SC** (15ml) – *Ciprallex*
- Ethinylestradiol 2.7mg / Etonogestrel 11.7mg vaginal delivery system (3) – *NuvaRing*
- Ethinylestradiol 20microgram / Desogestrel 150microgram tablets (63) – *Gedarel*
- Ethinylestradiol 30microgram / Desogestrel 150microgram tablets (63) – *Gedarel*
- Ferrous sulfate 125mg/ml oral drops sugar free **SC** (15ml) – *Ironorm*
- *Gemfibrozil 600mg tablets (30) – *Tilomed Laboratories Ltd*
- Magnesium glycerophosphate (magnesium 97.2mg (4mmol))

- chewable tablets sugar free (50) – *Neomag*
- Methotrexate 10mg/0.4ml solution for injection pre-filled syringes **SC** (1) – *Zlatal*
- Octreotide 100micrograms/1ml solution for injection vials (5) – *Pfizer Ltd*
- Pyridostigmine bromide 180mg modified-release tablets (100) – *Mestinon Retard*
- Salicylic acid 16.7% / Lactic acid 15% paint **SC** (15ml) – *Duofilm*
- Venlafaxine 37.5 modified release capsules (28) – *Venlablue XL*

Part VIII A amendments

- Cyanocobalamin 50microgram tablets (50) – *Cytacon* is changing to Category A
- Fluoxetine 30mg capsules (30) is changing to Category C – *Medreich Plc*
- Gemfibrozil 600mg tablets (56) is changing to Category C – *Lopid*

Part VIII A deletions

- If a medicinal product has been removed from Part VIII A and has no other pack sizes listed, it can continue to be dispensed as long as the product does not appear in Part XVIII A (the 'Blacklist'). However, it will need to be endorsed fully (i.e. brand or supplier name and pack size dispensed).
- Cyproterone 50mg tablets (168) Category C – *Cyprostat*

Part IX deletions

It is important to take careful note of removals from Part IX because if you dispense a deleted product, prescriptions will be returned as disallowed and therefore payment will not be made for dispensing the item.

Product	Size, type and product code
Bard Reliacath Plastic, Paediatric (Bard Ltd)	8 Ch (D5032)
Paraffin Gauze Dressing BP Sterile (Normal Loading - 175-220g/ m2) – Paragauze	10cm x 10cm
Hydrocolloid Dressing, Semi-permeable, Sterile, Without Adhesive Border – Comfeel Plus (Formerly Comfeel Plus Ulcer Dressing (Bevelled Edge))	Triangular – 18cm x 20cm
Hydrogel Dressing, Sterile – Hyiodine	22g and 50g
Wound Management Dressings – Mextra Superabsorbent	Square – 10cm x 10cm Rectangular – 10cm x 15cm, 10cm x 20cm, 15cm x 20cm, 20cm x 25cm, 20cm x 30cm
Urisac Range: Leg Bags with push/pull outlet and foam velcro straps (Bard Ltd)	750ml, long tube (pack of 10) (7664) 750ml, short tube (pack of 10) (7665)
OstoMart OstoFix Flange Security Tape (Respond Healthcare Ltd)	2.5cm x 10cm (pack of 100) (DGW1) 5cm x 10cm (pack of 100) (DGW2)