

Updated November 2021

PSNC Briefing 015/20: Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs): SSP05 – Fluoxetine 10mg tablets

Introduction

This PSNC Briefing provides information on the Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) for Fluoxetine 10mg tablets issued by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on 12 March 2020. **SSP05** will enable community pharmacists in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to supply patients with a different formulation.

For prescriptions (NHS or private) requesting:	Supply permitted under SSP05:
Fluoxetine 10mg tablets	Fluoxetine 10mg capsules

SSP05 allows for the **capsule** formulation to be supplied, if Fluoxetine 10mg tablets specified on the prescription is unobtainable. The dosage and duration of treatment would remain as prescribed.

Pharmacists are required to read and comply with the requirements outlined within the individual SSP as published on the [NHSBSA website](#). This briefing is only intended as a short guide to read in conjunction with [PSNC's SSP guide for community pharmacy teams](#).

This SSP commenced on 12 March 2020 and is currently due to expire on 11 February 2022; the expiry date may be brought forward or extended so the validity of the SSP should be checked on the NHSBSA website, as appropriate.

Key points

1. Pharmacists who receive a prescription for Fluoxetine 10mg tablets **must** consider SSP05.
2. Pharmacists should ensure they are using the latest version of an SSP before considering the supply of an alternative product.
3. The supervising pharmacist **may** supply the alternative capsule formulation – having exercised his/her professional skill and judgement – he/she is of the opinion the supply is reasonable and appropriate for the patient, and the patient agrees and consents to the alternative supply.
4. There are **additional considerations** associated with supply under an SSP, for example:
 - a. **Dosage** should remain as originally prescribed;
 - b. Under these SSPs the total **quantity** supplied should be equivalent to the duration of treatment as the original prescription;
 - c. **Labelling** should include 'supplied against SSP number [state number]';
 - d. **Claiming/endorsement** – see additional endorsement guidance below;
 - e. **Record-keeping** – the alternative supply should be recorded on the PMR/as per your usual SOP;

- f. GP notification is not required for these SSPs but may be professionally/clinically appropriate in certain cases;
- g. **Patient consent/agreement** – if a patient declines an alternative under an SSP you should advise them to return to the prescriber; and
- h. All prescriptions in England are covered under these SSPs, including hospital and private prescriptions.

Endorsements

To ensure correct payments (fees and reimbursement) for any supplies made against this SSP, the contractor must endorse the prescription form, EPS Token or Electronic Reimbursement Endorsement Message (EREM) as per Clause 9, Part II of the Drug Tariff. When supplying in accordance with these SSPs, contractors should refer to the updated endorsement guidance for each SSP available on [NHSBSA’s SSP page](#).

If the contractor chooses to endorse the EPS Token instead of the EREM, then they will need to indicate on the EREM either “ND” or “Not dispensed” and then proceed with the endorsement on the EPS Token. Please see below the required endorsements for this SSP.

- **‘SSP 005’ or ‘NCSO’** – to indicate that the supply was made in accordance with an SSP. For endorsement purposes, SSP05 should be endorsed as SSP 005. (**Note.** A transition period (1 June 2021 - 5 February 2022 (i.e. for January’s prescriptions claimed by 5 February)) has been agreed to enable use of the existing ‘NCSO’ endorsement until February 2022 (i.e. for January’s prescriptions claimed by 5 February). During the transition period, the NHSBSA will accept either the new ‘SSP’ or existing ‘NCSO’ endorsement for any SSP claims submitted using electronic prescriptions, EPS tokens or FP10 paper prescriptions.)
- **For SSP05, other usual endorsements relating to drug, strength, formulation and quantity are not necessary as presence of just the ‘SSP 005’ or ‘NCSO’ endorsement would clearly indicate to the NHSBSA what was supplied.**

See below worked endorsement example for a supply made under SSP05:

Prescription for	Alternative supplied under SSP05	Endorsement example	
Fluoxetine 10mg tablets	Fluoxetine 10mg capsules	SSP 005	Fluoxetine 10mg tablets 30 tablets One tablet daily

If the contractor chooses to endorse the EPS Token instead of the EREM, then they will need to indicate on the EREM either “ND” or “Not dispensed” and then proceed with the endorsement on the EPS Token. Please see below the required endorsements for this SSP.

SSP endorsed FP10 paper prescriptions and EPS Tokens must be placed at the front of the red separator (preferably tied with an elastic band) when submitted to the NHSBSA for processing. **DO NOT** place SSP-endorsed Tokens with other Tokens submitted as part of usual end of month submission process (Tokens with paid and exempt status declaration except for age-exempt patients).

See below worked endorsement example for a supply made under SSP05 on electronic prescription:

Where **'SSP' endorsement functionality is available** on the dispensing system the contractor must select SSP, select the appropriate pack in the system and input/endorse the three-digit reference number.

Prescription for	Pharmacy contractor supplies and <u>selects in system</u> pack of	Endorsement example
Fluoxetine 10mg tablets x 30	Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30	SSP 005

Where **'SSP' endorsement functionality is NOT available** on the dispensing system, but the contractor is able to use the 'NCSO' functionality for SSPs then endorse 'NCSO' and supply the additional information as detailed in the table below. Note: there should be no spaces in between the wording for the endorsement options as outlined in the table below. **Please note the 'NCSO' endorsement can only be used until the 5 February 2022 (i.e. for January's prescriptions claimed by 5 February).**

Prescription for	Pharmacy contractor supplied	Endorsement example
Fluoxetine 10mg tablets x 30	Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30	NCSO

See our [PSNC Briefing 011/21: Serious Shortage Protocols \(SSPs\) updated endorsing](#) for the full endorsement guidance.

Prescription charges

For each item, only one prescription charge will be applicable for patients who are not exempt from prescription charges. The only circumstance in which patients would not have to pay for a prescription charge is where an SSP requires a lower quantity to be supplied. Please note that the SSP for Fluoxetine 10mg tablets does not allow for a lower quantity to be supplied, so patients will continue to pay prescription charges (unless they are already exempt).

Top Tips

- NHSBSA advise that contractor SSP claims should be clear and unambiguous and follow the protocol guidelines – NHSBSA processing staff must be able to determine what has been supplied.
- Ensure that the dispensed notification messages for all EPS SSP claims are submitted on time each month and before the expiry date of the SSP. View our [SSP submission reminder](#) to ensure your SSP claims are appropriately submitted to NHSBSA for reimbursement.
- Provided that supplies are made within the expiry date of the SSP05, any SSP claims will continue to be accepted for up to three calendar months after expiry or withdrawal of the SSP. For example, SSP for Fluoxetine 10mg tablets, which is due to expire on 11 February 2022, the NHSBSA would look for the "SSP" endorsement in the February batch (submitted by the 5 March), March batch (submitted by the 5 April), April batch (submitted by the 5 May).

- Pharmacy teams are advised to submit SSP claims using the EPS Token if the PMR systems do not support/capture all the SSP endorsement requirements for a valid SSP claim.
- If using the EPS Token to submit SSP claims, remember need to indicate on the EREM or electronic claim message either “ND” or “Not dispensed” and then proceed with the endorsement on the EPS Token to avoid double-claiming.
- Where available, use the claim amend facility on your PMR system to rectify any incorrect EPS claims already submitted within a calendar month.
- Check that the correct number of patient charges are collected and declared on the end of month FP34C submission form.
- Any paper prescriptions or Tokens with SSP claims need to be placed in a red separator (and kept separate from other Tokens for non-payment i.e. with paid/exempt status).
- Pharmacy contractors are advised to keep a record of all SSP claims submitted each month to reconcile against the Schedule of Payments.
- For guidance on SSPs in Wales, click [here](#).
- For guidance on SSPs in Northern Ireland, click [here](#).

SSP FAQs

Q. Can pharmacists supply an alternative Fluoxetine product (for e.g. oral solution) not listed in the SSP?

A. Pharmacists are not able to deviate from the SSP on what to supply to patients; they can only supply alternative as outlined in the SSP for Fluoxetine 10mg tablets. However, if pharmacists think that an alternative product not listed in the SSP would be suitable for the patient, such as Fluoxetine liquid because the patient has difficulty swallowing capsules, they should either contact the prescriber to discuss this (with the patient’s consent) or direct the patient back to their prescriber.

Q. Can I obtain and supply the unlicensed Fluoxetine 10mg tablets against the SSP?

A. No. Supply of unlicensed tablets are not covered by SSP05 for Fluoxetine 10mg tablets. The need for an unlicensed product needs to be determined by the prescriber. If the unlicensed product is required, the prescription would need to specify ‘Fluoxetine 10mg tablets (Special Order)’ and the prescription needs to be endorsed as a Non-Part VIIIIB special.

Q. Does the SSP apply in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales?

A. The SSP applies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It does **NOT** apply in Scotland.

Q. How can I check if I have been correctly paid for any supplies made under SSPs?

A. The total of any SSP fees paid will appear on your monthly Schedule of Payment under ‘SSP Remuneration (SSP fees)’. The ‘SSP reimbursement’ field will indicate the total VAT element only applicable to any supplies made under SSPs. Contractors are strongly advised to keep a monthly record of all supplies made against SSPs to reconcile against the Schedule of Payments.

Resources

[PSNC Briefing 011/21](#) - This PSNC Briefing relates to the updated endorsing guidance for SSPs

[PSNC Briefing 023/19](#) - This PSNC Briefing describes how SSPs will work in practice and provides guidance on what you need to do if an SSP is put in place.

[NHSBSA SSP page](#)

If you have any queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information, please contact:

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