

To: GP practice managers for internal practice dissemination
YOR-LMC
Community pharmacies
Community Pharmacy North Yorkshire (LPC)

Date: 22nd February 2019

Re: **EU exit and medicines supply**

Dear Colleagues

I am writing to update you on advice and direction to help avoid unnecessary stock shortages as part of the planning for EU exit. A letter from Keith Ridge, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, outlines steps taken by DHSC, NHSE and partners to protect the continuity of supply for medicines, in particular if there is a 'no deal' EU Exit:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/medicine-supply-update-letter-from-dr-keith-ridge-cbe/>

The DHSC, NHS England and NHS Improvement have put extensive plans and contingency measures in place to avoid and manage supply chain pressures that may result from EU exit arrangements. The purpose of my letter is to guide behaviour to ensure we do not create additional pressures; it should not trigger undue concern.

Stockpiling

The importance of not having local stockpiles of medication has already been emphasised to pharmacies and GP practices. In circumstances where there is just enough stock of an item in the country, local stockpiling will likely present as regional or national shortages.

I also ask GP practices, out of hours, A&E and pharmacies to manage situations effectively where patients, carers or staff might be trying to create their own personal stockpile.

Prescribing

To help reduce waste and patient stockpiling, I ask prescribers to not exceed normal prescribing quantities. As part of our waste reduction programme it may be appropriate to review quantities prescribed in some cases. Patients' own stockpiles could add greater pressure to supplies and increase the risk of unnecessary waste.

Generic prescribing (where clinically appropriate to do so) may avoid supply problems. If a prescribed medicine is available then it is recommended that this continues to be prescribed rather than changed to an alternative drug (even when the price is temporarily inflated).

Dispensing

Contractual requirements for dispensing NHS prescriptions remain in place. It is appreciated that contractors can face considerable challenges to locate stock in order to provide patients with an item that has been appropriately prescribed for them. This can require dispensing contractors to purchase items at prices above the NHS Drug Tariff costs in the expectation that existing national processes will appropriately recompense them for a more expensive product. The agreed system for pharmacies to report such price variance is through PSNC, which will allow these circumstances to be understood and managed centrally via the price concession (NCSO) model. The DDA advised that dispensing doctors are also invited to contribute reports on generic shortages through the PSNC website.

<http://psnc.org.uk/dispensing-supply/supply-chain/supply-issues-feedback/>

It is preferable that the patient receives the treatment prescribed for them rather than look to change to an alternative drug. Guidance for dispensing contractors can be accessed at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2018/06/nhse-sw-msg-jun-18.pdf>

Community pharmacists are well placed to liaise with GPs if there is no stock available to match the prescribed item.

Advice for patients

Patients should be reassured of effective communication between the dispensary and their GP surgery and should be kept up to date with the progression of their medication supply issue as appropriate and practical. Patient information will be hosted on the <https://www.nhs.uk> website as it becomes available. A PSNC factsheet may also be helpful for patients and can be found at <https://psnc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/PSNC-Patient-Leaflet.pdf>.

In the interests of our population both locally and nationally, we urge all parties to collaborate to minimise disruption and change and to meet patients' needs. Maintaining positive professional relationships will be invaluable in helping to manage current and future pressures.

Further updates, guidance and direction are expected in time and may supersede the content of this letter. Communications can be found on CCG websites, <https://www.england.nhs.uk/eu-exit/> and in the Medicines and Medical Products Guidance section at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-for-a-possible-no-deal-eu-exit-information-for-the-health-and-care-sector#medicines-and-medical-products:-guidance>

Should you have any queries regarding this communication then please contact the Medicine Management Team within your CCG.

Kind Regards



Ken Latta
Head of Medicines Management

Further References:

<https://www.hambletonrichmondshireandwhitbyccg.nhs.uk/guidelines-pathways-protocols-and-pgds>

<http://www.harrogateandruraldistrictccg.nhs.uk/supply-issues-and-brexite-information/>

<http://www.scarboroughhryedaleccg.nhs.uk/medicine-supply-issues-and-brexite-information/>

RCGP Blog at <https://rcgp-news.com/49LX-HCEF-B812U5BR87/cr.aspx>, via 'Read More' then 'Stockpiling'