

Pharmacy & Medicines Directorate Weekly Update



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Wholesalers and Medicines Availability

We are aware that a number of manufacturers are using single wholesaler distribution models, meaning certain branded medications are only available via specific wholesalers e.g. Alliance or Phoenix. Whilst recognising that this add complexity and potentially additional costs for contractors, we write to remind all pharmacy contractors of the NHS Pharmaceutical Services (Scotland) Regulations (delivery of which is the essence of your Contract with NHS Grampian) requirement regarding the timely supply of medication in response to a prescription.

This means that if a patient presents a prescription in your pharmacy for an item supplied by a wholesaler which you do not use, you are required to do one of the following:

- a) Set up an account with that wholesaler to enable supply of the required medication OR
- b) Source another pharmacy who does have an account and can fulfil the prescription by the next working day for the patient.

Failure to provide a timely supply of medication in response to a prescription, where no mitigation in the form of a recognised shortage is present, will be considered a breach of your contractual obligation and will be escalated to NHS Grampian Pharmacy Performance and Governance Group.

Out of Stock Medicines Procedure

Where there is a genuine medicine shortage and you cannot fulfil the requested prescription, the following actions should be taken:

- a) Check all available wholesalers
- b) Check supplies with all other pharmacies in your network
- c) Review the unavailable medication information / MSAN on SPS: [Medicines supply – SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#)
- d) Prepare a list of available alternative(s) to share with the patient's practice (please share this with colleagues if e.g. pharmacy dispenser phoning practice to report the shortage)
- e) Contact the practice and provide this alternative information. If there is uncertainty about the indication for treatment and the patient isn't available to confirm this, please discuss with the prescribing clinician.

If you receive a repeat or serial prescription for a known unavailable product, please do not wait until the patient attends for collection before you action this.

Finally, practice teams are generally in touch with each other and with multiple pharmacies; they also have the ability to look at shortage lists and contact wholesalers. Misinforming practices that a supply is not available when in fact it is available but not at the price below the tariff is likely to lead to a complain about failure to deliver contractual obligations. Likewise, patients are increasingly vocal about pharmacies failing to provide certain medicines when they are freely available from other pharmacies. We have seen an increase in complaints regarding these issues and the actions of the few do have the potential to bring the whole contractor network's reputation into question.

The Drug Tariff

All pharmacy contractors are reminded that failure to fulfil a prescription due to the product being above Tariff price is considered a clear breach of your contract. The reimbursement system for community pharmacies is based 'in the round' i.e. not all drugs will return the same margin for contractors and there are specific mechanisms in place to manage situations where the tariff is out of step with the market. Pharmacy contractors must not 'cherry pick' the prescriptions they supply based on the profitability of the supply. Using intermediate buying systems to filter out medications from your order lines based on purchase costs being above tariff is not acceptable.

The PCS regulations only allow refusal to supply under two circumstances; the first is suspicion of a fraudulent prescription (i.e. is not valid) and the second is where the supplying pharmacy has concerns over safety. Where the Board is aware of these measures being implemented by contractors, we will escalate and manage these concerns accordingly. If a professional or premises standard has been breached, this may also include a GPhC referral.

Situational Awareness of Scabies

We have been made aware of a widespread rumour of a scabies outbreak at an Aberdeen City school, Northfield Academy. The deputy head has confirmed that there is **not** a scabies outbreak at the school and a reassuring communication will be shared with parents, including sign posting to NHS Inform.

We request community pharmacies to please be aware of this prior to assessing the need for treatment if requested.

Palliative Care Evening Education Series

The Palliative and End-of-Life Care Network is organising another series of online evening talks for **palliative care network pharmacies**, this time centred around palliative medicine in chronic diseases. These sessions will take place on Teams and are open to anyone with an interest or involvement in palliative medicine. Upcoming sessions are as follows:

CLICK LINK TO REGISTER:

[Palliative care in renal medicine with Dr Laura Clark, Wednesday 7 February, 6pm.](#)

CLICK LINK TO REGISTER:

[Dementia at end of life, with Kenny Davidson, Monday 18 March, 6pm.](#)

Other sessions are being planned for palliative care of respiratory and cardiac conditions. Details to follow when available.

Representative attendance from all palliative care pharmacies is required to fulfil the training requirements of the community pharmacy palliative care network. We can confirm these sessions will not be recorded.

We encourage you to attend. The link to register can be found here: [Understanding migraine, treatments and accessing Grampian support. Tickets, Wed 31 Jan 2024 at 19:00 | Eventbrite.](#)

Migraine Management Project Webinar Update

Thank you to all of those who attended the Understanding migraine, treatments and accessing Grampian support information session that took place on the 31st January – an outstanding 463 people! We are delighted to have been able to support so many people living or caring for those with migraine in Grampian to better understand the condition.

For those who could not attend the information session, it was recorded and is available to view on YouTube [here](#).

If you have questions that were not answered during the event the QR code attached provides access to [Migraine \(nhsgrampian.org\)](#) where there are links to the resources outlined at the information session.

An additional webinar for pharmacy staff only is scheduled to be held on Thursday 15th February from 19:00 – 21:00 on MS Teams. Please find the attached leaflet for more information.



NHS Grampian FITSurgery Website

Two years ago, NHS Grampian launched the [FitSurgery \(nhsgrampian.org\)](#) website, a local resource which provides information that helps improve overall patient experience, recovery times, shortened hospital stays, and better surgical outcomes.

The website encourages patients to undertake as much physical exercise as they can, improve their diet and reduce smoking and alcohol intake. It also aims to ensure patients are psychologically prepared, advised on medications and have prepared their home for discharge prior to an operation.



FIT Surgery posters and banners are displayed in clinical areas across NHS Grampian hospital sites. If you do not have any within your area but would like some, please contact heather.taylor6@nhs.scot

FITSurgery can be accessed directly here <https://www.fitsurgery.org> or via the QR Code attached. It is located within NHS Grampian's current public facing website and any initiatives that support patients who are coming into hospital for surgery can be added.

Smoking Cessation Update

Vaping Update

I'm sure you'll have heard by now that single use vapes are to be banned in due course. This comes on the back of a 4-nations approach Consultation process where public and health professionals had their say on various issues associated to smoking and vaping. The Consultation outcomes were published on 29/1/24 and you can read more about them here: [Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping consultation: government response - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

If you'd like to read more about the Scottish Government's plan to ban disposable vapes, information can be found here: [Tobacco age of sale to be raised and single-use vapes banned - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Considering Drug Interactions with Smoking

Liver enzymes may be induced by smoking, thereby reducing blood levels of interacting medicines. Enzyme induction is related to smoke exposure. If the person increases the amount they smoke, enzymes will be induced further. It can take several weeks to achieve maximum induction while new enzymes are made.

You can check up-to-date information here: [Managing specific interactions with smoking – SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#)

Community Pharmacy Scotland Round-Up



The Happy Place 😊

Farewell to Sarah Buchan, Pharmaceutical Services Improvement & Development Manager

You may already be aware that our wonderful Pharmaceutical Services Improvement and Development Manager, Sarah Buchan, completed her final day with NHS Grampian on Friday 26th January. We congratulate Sarah on her successful and well-deserved appointment as Director of Pharmacy for NHS Highland. Our loss is certainly their gain and I'm sure you will join the Pharmaceutical Care Services Team in wishing her every success in her new, exciting role! We miss you already Sarah!



Please ensure email queries are sent into our generic email address gram.pharmaceuticalcareservices@nhs.scot.

We would like to continue this section as an opportunity for reward, recognition and good news stories of the teams who read this! Please submit any items for inclusion to:
gram.pharmaceuticalcareservices@nhs.scot

All weekly updates are uploaded to the [CP Grampian website](#).

Remember to like our Facebook page for regular updates: [Community Pharmacies Delivering NHS Grampian Services](#)