

Date: 15 August, 2024
Our Ref: PCS/NewsletterCorrection
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Re: Correction to CP Newsletter Article - 30th July 2024

Dear Community Pharmacy Contractors,

We have received feedback from the contractors committee that a statement in the July newsletter under item 3 was inaccurate, regarding the use of intermediate buying systems to filter out medications from your order lines based on purchase costs being above tariff. A correction is included below with our apologies and thank you to the committee members for feeding back this to us.

Extreme caution should be used where intermediate buying systems are in operation to filter out medications from your order lines based on purchase costs being above tariff. We have had a number of instances where this has led to non-supply of medication in breach of the obligations placed on a pharmacy by the regulations.

The positive aspect of such systems is that they help the profitability of the pharmacy and ultimately drive the search for cheaper products that benefit the NHS. However, these intermediate systems are of significant concern where a single wholesaler approach to buying is in operation or Pharmacy teams are not aware of their obligation to supply regardless of tariff reimbursement / are being told not to order above tariff price.

An example recently saw a pharmacy not supply the antibiotic erythromycin which was being marketed well above the tariff price in early summer. The correct procedure was to supply whatever brand was available and report the price difference to CPS. In July the price was amended from 224p to 2350p to reflect the market shift demonstrating that the CPS reporting mechanism and response from the tariff is working. This price adjustment, along with others in place, was available to view on the CPS website.

The example above raised a number of concerns regarding compliance with both the premises standards if there was a 'rule' in place to restrict ordering and personal pharmacist standards in terms of patient centred care delivery and use of professional judgement. To deny an individual, in this case an elderly vulnerable patient, their acute treatment was not acceptable.

If you are running intermediate software, please remember your obligation to supply and the CPS reporting mechanism to feedback the current market price / availability.

Thank you and kind regards,

Pharmaceutical Services Team