

# MEMO

To: General practitioners, Primary Care Pharmacists and Consultant Psychiatrists  
From: New Craigs Pharmacy Department  
Date: 12/11/2024

Re: **SUPPLY PROBLEMS WITH MEDICINES FOR ADHD IN ADULTS (UPDATED)**

## DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED PRODUCTS

A [National Patient Safety Alert](#) was issued on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023 due to supply disruptions of methylphenidate preparations, lisdexamfetamine and guanfacine. The shortages were caused by a combination of manufacturing issues and increased global demand.

There have been updated Medicine Supply Notification (MSAN) published in 2024 to update the situation for each of these products and we have summarised the information in the table overleaf.

### **Medicines Supply Alert Notices**

[Methylphenidate prolonged-release tablets \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Lisdexamfetamine \(Elvanse®\) capsules \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Guanfacine \(Intuniv®\) 2mg and 3mg modified-release tablets \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (NHS Highland)

- New patients should not routinely be commenced on treatment with medication for ADHD at present. In urgent cases where clinical judgement deems that the ADHD symptoms are significantly impacting on level of risk, medication can be initiated utilising one of the available options.
- Where there are insufficient supplies for an individual already established on treatment, the clinical advice in the tables overleaf can guide suitable alternatives that may be available. Switching between formulations can result in changes in a patient's symptom management. If patients are prescribed a different preparation they should be reviewed and the dose adjusted if required.
- Parallel Imports and 'specials' liquids may be available and ordered by community pharmacies (following the appropriate community pharmacy approval) where there is a clinical need. There may be a lag time for this procurement route
- Not all ADHD products are licensed for use in adults and prescribers should be aware that switching between brands and products may constitute an off licence use of a medication.
- New Craigs Pharmacy department are facing the same difficulties in obtaining ADHD medication and therefore we cannot accept GP10 requests for individual patients to maintain supply.

## ADHD Medications:

Medication	Products	Action and information
<b>Stimulants</b>		
Methylphenidate MR: 12 hour release  Biphasic release ~22%:78%	Concerta® XL tablets Delmosart® prolonged-release tablets Xaggitin® XL tablets Xenidate® XL tablets Affenid® XL tablets Matoride® XL tablets  Tablet strengths: 18mg, 27mg, 54mg	Methylphenidate prolonged-release tablet brands are in limited supply and intermittent regional supply disruptions are expected to continue into 2025.  12 hourly preparations can be prescribed generically to allow available bioequivalent brands to be dispensed.  If no bioequivalent preparation is available it may be necessary to switch to an alternative.  <b>18mg of the 12hr prolonged release preparation is roughly equivalent to 15mg of the alternative methylphenidate preparations and a direct switch is possible.</b> However, depending on the tablet strengths available, it may be more appropriate to start at a lower strength and titrate according to tolerability and response.
Methylphenidate MR: 8 hour release  Biphasic release 30%:70%	Equasym XL® 10mg, 20mg, 30mg capsules	<b>No bioequivalent product</b>  Equasym® XL capsules remain available but cannot support increased demand.  Not licensed in adults  Should be taken before breakfast
Methylphenidate MR: 8 hour release  Biphasic release 50%:50%	Medikinet XL® 5mg, 10mg, 20mg, 30mg, 40mg, 50mg, 60mg capsules Metyrol XL® 10mg,20mg,30mg,40mg,60mg capsules Meflynate XL® 10mg,20mg,30mg,40mg,60mg capsules	These products are currently available  Should be taken with food

Methylphenidate IR : immediate release	Generic, Medikinet, Ritalin, Tranquilyn 5mg, 10mg, 20mg tablets	<p>These products are currently available</p> <p>The total dose should be split across two to three administrations but in general, the last dose should not be given too close to bedtime in order to prevent disturbances in falling asleep</p>
Lisdexamfetamine	<p>Elvanse® capsules Elvanse adult® capsules</p> <p>Capsule strengths: 20mg, 30mg, 40mg, 50mg, 60mg, 70mg</p>	<p><b>No bioequivalent product</b></p> <p>There are intermittent issues with the 40 and 60 mg strengths. Clinicians are advised to titrate dose via a 30mg, 50mg &amp; 70mg schedule where possible</p> <p>Elvanse® and Elvanse Adult® capsules can be prescribed generically until supply issues resolve</p> <p>Consider appropriateness of prescribing as a first line alternative in adults, if a treatment is required before normal supply of methylphenidate prolonged-release tablets resume;</p> <p>There is no established conversion between methylphenidate and lisdexamfetamine. Normal titration schedule of lisdexamfetamine should be followed rather than a direct switch.</p>
<b>Non stimulants</b>		
Atomoxetine	Atomoxetine capsules and oral solution	<p><b>No bioequivalent product</b></p> <p>Atomoxetine (Strattera) 4mg/ml oral solution is currently in limited supply. Further substantial resupplies are expected in October 2024.</p> <p>Atomoxetine capsules are currently in stock</p> <p>Atomoxetine can be stopped abruptly, with no adverse effects if a patient runs out of supply.</p>
Guanfacine	Intuniv ® prolonged release tablets	<p><b>No bioequivalent product</b></p> <p>All strengths available currently</p> <p>It is important to note that guanfacine should <u>not</u> be stopped abruptly due to risk of rebound hypertension. A safe dose reduction is by 1mg every three to seven days.</p>

### **Estimated stock supplies and resupply dates**

The availability of ADHD medication is ever changing and the most up to date information can be found via the specialist pharmacy service (SPS - free registration required): [Medicines Supply Tool – SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#)

The NHS Highland Medicines Shortages Log can also be utilised (intranet access required): [Medicine Shortages \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

### **Further information**

Choice and medication fact sheets on the use of ADHD medicines:

[handyfactsheetadhdformsuk.pdf \(choiceandmedication.org\)](#)

[handyfactsheetmethylphenidateswitchinguk.pdf \(choiceandmedication.org\)](#)

**Disclaimer:** This memo has been adapted from information from NHS Lanarkshire, East London NHS trust and South London and Maudsley trust. The content does not reflect national guidance. Some of this memo is based on **clinical opinion** from practitioners. Users should bear this in mind in deciding whether to base their policy on this document. Individual trusts should ensure that procedures for unlicensed medicines are followed where a foreign import drug is required in the interim. Any decision to prescribe off-label must take into account the relevant GMC guidance and NHS Trust governance procedures for unlicensed medicines. Prescribers are advised to pay particular attention to the risks associated with using unlicensed medicines or using a licensed medicine off-label