

**From the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
Professor Cathy Harrison**



FOR ACTION

Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning and Performance Group (*for onward transmission to relevant staff*)

Chief Executive, Business Services Organisation (*for onward transmission to relevant staff*)

Assistant Director of Integrated Care, Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, SPPG (*for onward distribution to Community Pharmacies*).

Head of General Medical Services, SPPG (*for onward distribution to GP Practices*)

GP Medical Advisers, Strategic Planning and Performance Group.

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Date: 24 May 2024

Dear Colleagues,

SERIOUS SHORTAGE PROTOCOL– CREON® 10,000 AND 25,000 GASTRO-RESISTANT CAPSULES

Serious shortage protocols (SSPs) under the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 (HMRs) are an additional tool to manage and mitigate medicines shortages. An SSP enables community pharmacists to supply a specified medicine in accordance with a protocol rather than a prescription, without needing to seek authorisation from the prescriber, saving time for patients, pharmacists and prescribers. They are used in the case of a serious shortage, where a medicine would be likely to be out of stock for some time, and if, in the opinion of ministers, it would help manage the supply situation.

I am writing to inform you that in response to current supply disruptions of **Creon 10,000 and 25,000 gastro-resistant capsules**, two SSPs, **SSP060** and **SSP061**, have been issued by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

From today, [SSP060](#) and [SSP061](#) provides that **where supplies are available of Creon® 10,000 and 25,000 gastro-resistant capsules, but the prescription is for more than one month's supply, a total quantity equivalent to one month's supply can be made.**

These SSPs, authorised by the Secretary of State on behalf of the four UK nations, has been developed by clinicians and provides pharmacists with procedures to follow in providing, where supplies are available, a reduced quantity of prescribed medication to help ensure more patients can access these treatments.

Both SSPs are due to expire on **Friday 22 November 2024**. Pharmacists should refer to the latest version of this SSP which is available on the Business Services Organisation (BSO) dedicated page on its website:

<https://bso.hscni.net/directorates/operations/family-practitioner-services/pharmacy/contractor-information/drug-tariff-and-related-materials/serious-shortage-protocols-ssps/>

Key Points:

- For **SSP060** and **SSP061**, where supplies are available, but the prescription is for more than one month's supply, the pharmacist under these protocols can make a reduced supply which is equivalent to one month's supply of the prescribed medicine.
- The patient/carer must be made aware that in accordance with these SSPs, no further supply can be made from the same prescription above the one-month quantity.
- Should the quantity on the prescription be unclear, the pharmacist should consult with the patient and use their professional judgement to make an appropriate supply under these SSPs. Pharmacists should refer to the relevant Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) and Patient Information Leaflets (PIL) to inform these decisions.
- Pharmacists do not need to routinely notify the prescriber and/or GP practice where a reduced quantity has been supplied under these SSPs. Please refer to '[Outline of Operational Guidance for Dispensers in response to issue of a Serious Shortage Protocol](#)' on the BSO website for more information.
- If a patient/carer declines to receive the reduced quantity of medicine under the relevant SSP, the pharmacist should use their professional judgement to determine if other courses of action are appropriate whilst taking into consideration wider supply issues. If this does not address their concerns, the patient/carer should be referred back to their prescriber for advice.

Action Required

All relevant staff should be made aware of these SSPs. I would ask the SPPG to bring this information to the attention of GP Practices and Community Pharmacists directly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Harrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Professor Cathy Harrison
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer