

From Kathryn Turner, Head of Pharmacy & Medicines Management (Interim)



By email

To All GP practices
To All Community Pharmacies

Strategic Planning and Performance Group

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Date: 26th August 2025

Dear Colleague

AVAILABILITY OF ANTIMICROBIAL AGENTS USED IN TUBERCULOSIS (TB) TREATMENT WITHIN PRIMARY CARE

This letter provides additional advice and guidance on the actions to take within general practices and community pharmacies to maintain essential patient access to treatment with anti-tuberculosis (TB) medicines.

The advice in this letter should be used in conjunction with the updated [National Patient Safety Alert](#) issued on 1 August 2025 until the supply disruptions are resolved.

Actions for GPs

1. Do not prescribe rifampicin for non-TB indications until the shortage is resolved.
2. Proactively identify patients within your practice who receive any of the affected TB treatments noted in the [National Patient Safety Alert](#).
3. If a prescription is required:
 - a. Liaise with local community pharmacies to understand what products are available, which may include monotherapies and/or combination products, and refer to the [National Patient Safety Alert](#) for potential therapeutic alternatives for the patient.
 - b. Prescribe a maximum of one month's supply to conserve stock.
 - c. Allow sufficient time for patient's community pharmacy to access stock. Ensure patients are informed and fully counselled about any changes to their usual or expected medication using multi-language patient-facing communications are provided where appropriate.

Actions for community pharmacies

1. If stock is not available from the pharmacy's usual wholesalers:
 - a. Contact other local pharmacies to understand their stock holdings and refer patients to another pharmacy if sufficient stock is available.
 - b. Check the [NHS SPS Medicines Supply Tool](#) for information about which wholesalers can source supplies of unlicensed imports and place orders if stock is available.
2. If the above options have been explored and insufficient stock has been identified locally:
 - a. Contact your local Trust pharmacy department to understand local arrangements for patients to access treatments, contact details can be found in the table below.
 - i. If contacting via email, please include "**URGENT TB MEDS**" in the subject title.
 - ii. Trust emails are generally monitored during normal weekday business hours.

| Trust | Contact details |
|---------------|--|
| Belfast | Belfast City Hospital Pharmacy: (Monday to Friday (9am to 4pm)) 02895040896 |
| South Eastern | Ulster.pharmacy@setrust.hscni.net |
| Western | Altnagelvin.Pharmacy@westerntrust.hscni.net |
| Northern | Pharmacy.Procurement@northerntrust.hscni.net |
| Southern | Pharmacy.purchasing@southerntrust.hscni.net |

- b. Ensure patients are well informed about where and how they can access their treatments under these arrangements.

Both general practices and community pharmacies should refer to the [NHS SPS Medicines Supply Tool](#) for the most up-to-date information on TB medicines, including anticipated resupply dates of licensed stock.

SPPG will keep you updated on any further developments.

Yours sincerely



Kathryn Turner
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