

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



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Castle Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 90 523219
Email: cathy.harrison@health-ni.gov.uk

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FOR ACTION

Chief Operating Officer, 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.

Dear Colleagues,

SERIOUS SHORTAGE PROTOCOLS– ADIPINE® XL (NIFEDIPINE) 30MG MODIFIED-RELEASE TABLET AND ADIPINE® XL 60MG MODIFIED-RELEASE TABLET

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 supply concerns across the UK regarding the availability of **Adipine® XL (nifedipine) 30mg modified-release tablets and Adipine® XL 60mg modified-release tablets** the Department of Health of Social Care (DHSC) has issued two SSPs.

[SSP084](#) provides that for **every Adipine® XL 30mg modified-release tablet that is originally prescribed, either one Adanif® XL 30mg modified-release tablet or one Neozipine® XL 30mg modified-release tablet or one Coracten® XL 30mg**

modified-release capsule can be supplied. This SSP is due to expire on **Friday 6 February 2026.**

SSP085 provides that for **every Adipine® XL 60mg modified-release tablet that is originally prescribed, either one Adanif® XL 60mg modified-release tablet or one Coracten® XL 60mg modified-release capsule or two Coracten® XL 30mg modified-release capsules can be supplied.** This SSP is due to expire on **Friday 6 February 2026.**

Pharmacists should refer to the latest version of these SSPs which are 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/>.

SSP084 and **SSP085** authorised by the Secretary of State on behalf of the four UK nations, have been developed by clinicians and provide pharmacists with procedures to follow in providing a suitable alternative product to help reduce the number of patients having to return to their prescriber for a replacement prescription.

Key Points:

- These SSPs do not allow for the quantity supplied to be less than the number of days prescribed on the original prescription.
- Pharmacists should note that the order of substitutions reflects preferential use of regimen that most closely matches existing treatment, where available.
- Pharmacists should counsel patients on a change in number of dose units to be taken if substituting with two Coracten® XL 30mg modified-release capsules under SSP085.
- Ensure that patients who are supplied in accordance with these SSPs are advised that they may require closer monitoring initially to ensure blood pressure/ angina symptoms remain controlled, and to report any adverse effects.
- Coracten® XL modified-release capsules contain gelatin which may not be acceptable to some patients on cultural or religious grounds.
- Community pharmacists should use their professional skill and judgement to decide whether it is reasonable and appropriate to substitute the patient's prescribed order for a supply under these SSPs. The patient/carer will also need to agree to supply under the SSP.
- Pharmacists must ensure that the patient's prescriber and/or GP practice is notified when supplying a patient in accordance with these SSPs as soon as practically possible and should aim to forward these details within 3 working days. Please refer to ['Outline of Operational Guidance for Dispensers in](#)

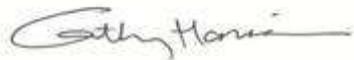
[response to issue of a Serious Shortage Protocol](#) on the BSO website for more information.

- If a patient/carer declines to receive the medicine under these protocols, 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', written in a cursive style.

Professor Cathy Harrison
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer