

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



**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.

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

Date: 22 December 2025

Dear Colleagues,

**SERIOUS SHORTAGE PROTOCOL– FIXAPOST® (LATANOPROST 50MCG/ML / TIMOLOL 5MG/ML) 0.2ML UNIT DOSE PRESERVATIVE FREE EYE DROPS**

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 **Fixapost® (latanoprost 50 mcg/ml / timolol 5mg/ml) 0.2ml unit dose preservative free eye drops** the Department of Health of Social Care (DHSC) has issued an SSP.

**SSP086** provides that for **every one x 30 pack of Fixapost® 0.2ml unit dose preservative free eye drops that is originally prescribed, one x 2.5ml bottle of Vizilatan Duo® preservative free eye drops can be supplied.** This SSP is due to expire on **Friday 6 February 2026.**

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/>.

**SSP086**, 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 a suitable alternative product to help reduce the number of patients having to return to their prescriber for a replacement prescription.

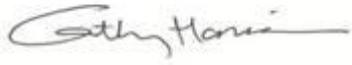
Key Points:

- This SSP does not allow for the quantity supplied to be less than the number of days prescribed on the original prescription.
- Both Fixapost® 0.2ml unit dose preservative free eye drops and Vizilatan Duo® 2.5ml preservative free eye drops contain **latanoprost 50mcg/ml / timolol 5mg/ml** and are both **preservative free** but differ in their presentations. **Fixapost® is a single dose preparation. Vizilatan Duo® is a multi-dose 4-week in-use shelf-life preparation.**
- Ensure the patient can use the multi-dose dropper in accordance with the [Patient Information Leaflet](#), including the requirement to pump the bottle 15 times before use.
- Ensure that patients are counselled on the correct use of the dropper device, the 4-week in-use shelf-life and reassured the product is preservative free.
- Ensure that patients considered unsuitable for inclusion are promptly referred back to their prescriber for further advice.
- 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 this SSP. The patient/carer will also need to agree to supply under the SSP.
- If a patient/carer declines to receive the medicine under this protocol, 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 this SSP. 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 prominent initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

**Professor Cathy Harrison**  
**Chief Pharmaceutical Officer**