



Pharmaceutical Services, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast BT2 8DQ
Telephone No. 028 95 36 0333

Dear Colleague

SUPPLY OF UNLICENSED/IMPORTED MEDICINES DUE TO A SHORTAGE OF A LICENSED MEDICATION

BSO/SPPG wish to remind contractors about the processes which should be followed when a medication is in short supply and only an unlicensed or imported medicine can be obtained. The prescriber should firstly be made aware that the only management option is to prescribe an unlicensed or imported medicine.

As noted in standard medicines supply notifications (MSN) published on the BSO website: [BSO link](#) and the Medicines Supply Tool – SPS: [SPS Link](#)

“Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must consider the relevant guidance and NHS Trust or local governance procedures. Unlicensed imports do not undergo any central quality assessment or suitability evaluation. Therefore, any import must be locally assessed in line with local unlicensed medicines processes.

Please see the links below for further information:

- [The supply of unlicensed medicinal products](#), Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
- [Professional Guidance for the Procurement and Supply of Specials](#), Royal Pharmaceutical Society
- [Prescribing unlicensed medicines](#), General Medical Council (GMC)

*When prescribing a product that is not licensed in the UK prescribers must indicate on the HS21 prescription that an unlicensed product is required. This can be done by annotating the prescription with the following wording: **special order**”*

In terms of reimbursement by BSO, the prescription which has been annotated by the prescriber with **special order** should be submitted in the amended bundle along with the invoice to ensure appropriate payment

Information on drug shortages is available at the [BSO link and SPS Link](#)

Examples of medication for which the above scenarios may be applicable include [Propranolol MR 80mg](#) and [Hyoscine hydrobromide 1.5mg patches](#).

If you have any queries, please contact

Mark.nelson@hscni.net (Pharmacy Advisor, Strategic Planning and Performance Group)

and/or

Edward.ashby@hscni.net (Pricing Team Leader, Family Practitioner Services (Pharmaceutical), Business Services Organisation)