



13 March 2020

## **Medicine Supply Alert Notice**

### **Lorazepam (Ativan®) 4mg/mL injection**

**Priority: Update to MSAN (2020)8**

**Valid until: w/c 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020**

#### **Issue**

1. Pfizer have limited supplies of lorazepam 4mg/mL injection so will be restricting orders direct to pharmacies in line with 50% historical demand between now and w/c 2<sup>nd</sup> March.
2. Pfizer anticipate going fully out of stock by 6<sup>th</sup> March, with a resolution date **w/c 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020**.
3. Importers can source limited supplies of unlicensed imports of lorazepam 4mg/mL injection, however, the average lead time is 4-6 weeks.
4. NOTE: Please do not use Diazemuls® in place of Ativan® as there are insufficient supplies to support this; (see UKMI memo for further information – link below).

#### **Advice and Actions**

##### Primary care

5. Community pharmacy teams should place orders directly with Pfizer for Ativan® to meet patient demand, once existing supplies have been exhausted, until the Pfizer re-supply date.

##### Secondary care

6. Health board pharmacy procurement teams should:
  - assess local stock holding of Ativan® injection;
  - consider centralising stock at pharmacy;
  - if further stock is required, place orders directly with Pfizer for Ativan® but only order 50% of normal usage requirements for the next two weeks;
  - consider placing orders now for unlicensed imports; and
  - consider sharing of stock between Boards to ensure continuity of care for patients.
7. If, having followed these steps, the Board is still likely to have a gap in supply, pharmacy procurement teams should work with clinical colleagues to:
  - agree priority indications for which remaining/available lorazepam will be reserved; and
  - consider and agree alternatives for indications/patients where appropriate, as per UKMI memo – link below).

#### **Additional Information**

8. UKMi have prepared a Clinical Memo to support the management of this supply issue:  
<https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/shortage-of-ativan-lorazepam-injection-4-mg-in-1-ml/>
9. The following specialist importers have indicated they can source unlicensed lorazepam 4mg/mL injection, but lead times range from 4-6 weeks (please note, there may be other companies that can also source supplies):
  - Alium Medical;

- Clinigen;
- Mawdsleys;
- Waymade;
- WEP Clinical.

10. Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must consider the relevant guidance and NHS Board governance procedures. Please see the links below for further information.

- [Prescribing unlicensed medicines](#), General Medical Council (GMC);
- [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.

### **Enquiries**

11. Enquiries from Health Boards or healthcare professionals should be directed in the first instance to [PharmacyTeam@gov.scot](mailto:PharmacyTeam@gov.scot) (primary care) or [NSS.NHSSMedicineShortages@nhs.net](mailto:NSS.NHSSMedicineShortages@nhs.net) (secondary care).