Chief Medical Officer Directorate
Pharmacy and Medicines Division

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Dear Colleague

EXTENSION TO SERIOUS SHORTAGE PROTOCOLS FOR ESTRADOT® (ESTRADIOL) PATCHES

Purpose

1. This Circular advises Health Boards and community pharmacy contractors that two UK-wide Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) for Estradot® (estradiol) transdermal patches, a hormone replacement therapy (HRT) product, due to expire on 6 June 2025 have been extended until Friday 10 October 2025.

2. The extension is applicable to SSP080 (75mcg strength Estradot® patch) and SSP081 (100mcg strength Estradot® patch), which allow community pharmacists to substitute a prescription of the noted Estradot® (estradiol) transdermal patches with the equivalent strength and same quantity of Evorel® (estradiol) transdermal patch or Estraderm MX® (estradiol) transdermal patch, for eligible patients, in accordance with these SSPs.

3. The current end dates of all Estradot® (estradiol) transdermal patches SSPs are as follows:
   - Friday 10 October 2025, for SSP080 (75mcg strength Estradot® patch) and SSP081 (100mcg strength Estradot® patch)
   - Friday 4 July 2025 for SSP082 (25mcg strength Estradot® patch), SSP079 (50mcg strength Estradot® patch).

4. Community pharmacists are advised to review and familiarise themselves with the new end dates for the above noted SSPs.

Background

5. To assist in alleviating current supply issues with medicines availability, various UK-wide SSPs have been issued by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC),), in consultation with the Scottish Government.

6 June 2025

Addresses

For action
Chief Executives, NHS Boards
Director Practitioner Services, NHS NSS

For information
Directors of Pharmacy
NHS Medical Directors

Enquiries to:

Pharmacy Team
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www.gov.scot

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POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

An SSP is an additional tool to manage and mitigate medication shortages for prescribing clinicians, community pharmacies and importantly patients.

6. Each SSP is individually developed and authorised clinically, to enable community pharmacists and dispensing doctors to dispense a different strength or formulation or alternative medicine or appliances in accordance with the protocol, rather than having to refer prescribing decisions back to the original prescriber. These protocols are time limited.

7. Community pharmacists are expected to use their professional skill and judgement to decide whether it is reasonable and appropriate to substitute a person's prescribed medicine using the SSP. The person will also have to agree to the alternative supply.

8. The DHSC frequently reviews which medicines should be under an SSP and for how long they need to be in place.

9. Any amendments or extensions to existing SSPs are documented on the NHS Business Services Authority website using the following link: Serious shortage protocols (SSPs) | NHSBSA.

Enquiries

10. For any queries on the details of this circular, please contact the Scottish Government Pharmacy Team at PharmacyTeam@gov.scot.

Action

11. **Health Boards are asked to note the contents of this Circular and to bring it to the attention of community pharmacy contractors on their Pharmaceutical Lists and their local Area Pharmaceutical Committee. This Circular should also be brought to the attention of General Practices.**

Yours sincerely,



Alison Strath
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer