



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care



## SERIOUS SHORTAGE PROTOCOL (SSP)

Reference Number: SSP051

Version Number:

This SSP applies to the following medicine

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Name of medicine (including strength and formulation)</b> | Paracetamol suppositories 240mg |
| <b>Legal category</b>  | P                               |

### 1. Details of medication to be supplied under this SSP

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name of medicine (including formulation and strength) to be supplied</b> | Paracetamol suppositories 250mg  |
| <b>Quantity of this formulation (if applicable)</b>                         | Total quantity supplied in accordance with this protocol is to be equivalent to the number of days supplied on the original prescription.<br><br>For every paracetamol 240mg suppository, the following quantity must – subject to the inclusion criteria below – be supplied in accordance with this protocol:<br><br>1 x paracetamol 250mg suppository |
| <b>Substitution results in a change to whether the use is licenced</b>      | No   |

### Scope for which this Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) applies

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| <b>The SSP applies to the following parts of the UK</b> | UK-wide |
|---|---------|

### Clinical situation to which this Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) applies

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Scope of SSP</b>  | <p>All NHS and private prescriptions.</p> <p>This protocol does not allow for the quantity supplied to be less than the number of days prescribed on the original prescription.</p>  |
| <b>Criteria for inclusion</b>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The patient/carer presents with a valid prescription (meeting the requirements of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012) for paracetamol 240mg suppositories.</li> <li>• The patient/carer consents to receiving the medicine supplied in accordance with this SSP.</li> <li>• The patient/carer should only be supplied in accordance with this SSP if the pharmacist is satisfied they understand and are able to accommodate the switch.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Criteria for exclusion</b>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the pharmacist, using their professional judgement, determines that the patient is not suitable to receive the marginally higher strength medicine in accordance with this SSP.</li> <li>• The patient/carer presents with a prescription for a medicine other than paracetamol 240mg suppositories.</li> <li>• The patient/carer presents a prescription which is not valid.</li> <li>• The patient/carer does not consent to receiving the medicine(s) supplied in accordance with this SSP.</li> <li>• Patients who have had a previous allergic reaction to paracetamol 250mg suppositories or their excipients.</li> <li>• Patients considered to be unsuitable or at higher risk need to be referred back to their prescriber promptly for further advice.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Cautions including any relevant action to be taken</b>          | <p>Ensure that patients considered unsuitable for inclusion are promptly referred to their prescriber for further advice.</p>  |
| <b>Special considerations for specific populations of patients</b> | <p>Concerns may be raised by patients about the slightly increased dose (10mg) of the alternative. For the average patient the slight increase in dose will not be clinically significant and it is negligible in the context of the overall dosing schedule. However, there may be some patients where dose is critical and these should be referred back to the prescriber.</p> <p>If the pharmacist, using their professional judgement, considers that supplying the patient in accordance with the SSP would not be appropriate, the patient should be referred back to their prescriber promptly.</p>  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Action to be taken if the patient is excluded</b>                  | If a patient/carer does not meet the criteria within this SSP then they should be referred back to their prescriber promptly.  |
| <b>Action to be taken if the patient or carer declines the supply</b> | If a patient/carer declines to receive medicine under this SSP then they should be referred back to their prescriber promptly. |

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Valid from:</b>       | 13/3/2023 |
| <b>Expiry date:</b>      | 5/5/2023  |
| <b>Reference number:</b> | SSP051    |
| <b>Version number:</b>   | 1.0       |

**Any queries regarding the content of this SSP which was issued by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, should be addressed to NHS Prescription Services.**

You can get in contact by:

**Email:** [nhsbsa.prescriptionservices@nhsbsa.nhs.uk](mailto:nhsbsa.prescriptionservices@nhsbsa.nhs.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 330 1349

**Textphone:** 18001 0300 330 1349

You can also write to us at:

| <b>Newcastle</b>  | <b>Middlebrook</b>   | <b>Wakefield</b>  |
|---|--|---|
| NHS Prescription Services<br>Bridge House<br>152 Pilgrim Street<br>Newcastle upon Tyne<br>NE1 6SN | NHS Prescription Services<br>Ridgway House<br>Northgate Close<br>Middlebrook<br>Horwich<br>Bolton<br>BL6 6PQ | NHS Prescription Services<br>4th Floor<br>Wakefield House<br>Borough Road<br>Wakefield<br>WF1 3UB |


## Change history

| <b>Version number</b> | <b>Change details</b> | <b>Date</b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
|                       |                       |             |

## 2. Conditions under which this Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) will operate

- The decision to supply any medicine under this protocol rests with the individual registered pharmacist who must abide by the protocol.

- Whilst pharmacy staff may support the dispensing process of the protocol, this must be carried out under the supervision of the registered pharmacist.
- Pharmacists using this SSP must ensure that it is only used within its authorised dates and within the criteria set out within the SSP. Pharmacists must check that they are using the current version of the SSP, particularly when referring to a hard copy version. Amendments may become necessary prior to the published expiry date. Current versions of SSP templates can be found at <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/serious-shortage-protocols-ssps>.
- **Pharmacists should note the requirements on packaging and labelling of products containing paracetamol set out in Part 4 of Schedule 25 to the Human Medicines Regulations 2012.**
- Users must not alter, amend or add to the content of this document; such action will invalidate the SSP.

| <b>Ministerial ratification by:</b> |                         |   |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------|
| <b>Name</b>                         | <b>Position</b>         | <b>Signature</b>  | <b>Date</b> |
| William Quince                      | Minister of State, DHSC |  | 16/02/2023  |

## **ADDENDUM**

### **Supporting information on notifying other healthcare professionals**

- Any items supplied in accordance with an SSP in response to an NHS prescription also needs to be supplied in accordance with the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013.
- Those Regulations provide that where a therapeutic equivalent is supplied, a pharmacist will need to inform a patient's GP practice. This would generally be expected within the next working day, but further guidance would be given in any case where this applied.
- Where a different quantity, an alternative pharmaceutical form, an alternative strength or a generic equivalent is provided, it may not always be necessary that the patient's prescriber is informed, as the existence of the SSP may be enough for the prescriber to be aware that these changes in dispensing may take place, unless national arrangements agreed with the relevant representative bodies state otherwise. However, guidance may be issued on particular SSPs to indicate that prescribers should be informed of any patients that receive supply under it.
- In the absence of any preferred local alternate communication channels, all feedback to prescribers should be sent by NHSmail. The NHS Service Finder is a way for pharmacies to look up the email address of the patient's GP.