

**Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) for Ovestin® 1mg cream –  
corresponding guidance on endorsement, prescription charges,  
remuneration and reimbursement plus Q&A.**

**SSP for Ovestin® 1mg cream**

1) Endorsement

The contractor must endorse the prescription form, EPS token or Electronic Reimbursement Endorsement Message (EREM) as per Clause 9, Part II of the Drug Tariff.

**Electronic prescription:**

Where SSP endorsement functionality is available on the dispensing system the contractor must select SSP and input the three-digit reference number, leaving a space between SSP and the reference number, as shown below. The contractor must also select in the system the SSP item that has been supplied.

Example	Endorsement
	<b>Option</b>
<p><b>Prescription for Ovestin® 1mg cream</b></p> <p>Pharmacy contractor supplies Ovestin® 1mg cream x 15g</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor selects in system Ovestin® 1mg cream x 15g</p>	SSP 020

**Non-electronic prescription form:**

Example	Endorsement
	<b>Option</b>
<p><b>Prescription for Ovestin® 1mg cream</b></p> <p>Pharmacy contractor supplies Ovestin® 1mg cream x 15g</p>	<p>SSP 020</p> <p>Ovestin® 1mg cream x 15g</p>

2) Prescription charges

For supply in accordance with this SSP, no prescription charges will be applicable for Ovestin® 1mg cream.

3) Remuneration

Supply in accordance with the SSP will result in the following fees being paid to the contactor:

- One Single Activity Fee (£1.27)
- One SSP fee (£5.35)

#### 4) Reimbursement

The supplied product in accordance with this SSP will be reimbursed as if it was dispensed against a prescription. In this instance, contractors will be reimbursed the Part VIII A reimbursement price for the quantity supplied for Ovestin® 1mg cream.

The reimbursement price will account for VAT payment.

## Q&A

### **Will the SSPs apply to cross-border prescriptions?**

Yes. Patients from England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland who present their prescriptions for Ovestin® 1mg cream are eligible to receive a lower quantity under the terms of the SSP.

### **Does the SSPs apply to private prescriptions?**

Yes. The scope of an SSP applies to valid prescriptions that meets the requirements of the Human Medicine Regulations 2012, so it would cover both NHS and private prescriptions, unless where it stated otherwise on the SSP itself.

### **Will prescription charges apply under the SSP?**

As a supply in accordance with the SSP is for a lower quantity compared to supply in accordance with the prescription, for NHS prescriptions, no prescription charge will be applicable.

### **Can pharmacists use their professional judgement to supply an alternative product to patients?**

Supply in accordance with this SSP only allows supply of a three month quantity when the prescription is for a longer duration. It does not allow the supply of a different product. However, if pharmacists think that an alternative product would be suitable for the patient, they should either contact the prescriber to discuss this (with the patient's consent) or direct the patient back to the prescriber.

### **What should pharmacists supply if the prescription states less than three months' supply should be dispensed?**

If the prescription states that either three months' supply or less is to be supplied to the patient, the pharmacist should dispense the medication in accordance with the prescription and prescription charges are payable.

### **Can pharmacists supply more than three months' supply?**

No, in accordance with this SSP, pharmacists will only be able to dispense three months' supply for Ovestin<sup>®</sup> 1mg cream. Patients should be made aware that under the terms of the SSP, the prescription will be deemed complete, and no further supply can be made from the same prescription above the three-month quantity.

### **What can a pharmacist do if the patient does not consent to receiving the medicine supplied in accordance with this SSP?**

Where a patient does not consent to receive a lower quantity in accordance with the SSP, the pharmacists should use their professional judgement to determine if other courses of action are appropriate whilst taking into consideration wider supply issues. For example, pharmacists in England must consider under their NHS terms of service if it is "reasonable and appropriate" to supply in accordance with the SSP. If the pharmacist concludes that it is not reasonable or appropriate to supply the medication in accordance with the SSP, the pharmacist must consider if they can dispense the prescription in the usual way 'in a reasonable timescale'. If they can, the ordinary obligation to dispense in accordance with the prescription applies. If they cannot, because the pharmacist has insufficient supply to fulfil the prescribed quantity within a reasonable timescale, the pharmacist may return the prescription, but if they do so, the pharmacist must provide the patient with appropriate advice about going back to the prescriber.

In the event that the pharmacist concludes that it is reasonable and appropriate to dispense in accordance with the SSP, but the patient persists in refusing to accept the option of the lesser quantity, the pharmacist may advise the patient that they will dispense in accordance with the SSP or not at all, if that is in accordance with their professional judgement.

The patient retains the right to either accept the professional decision of the pharmacist or to ask for their prescription to be returned to them.

### **Does the SSP apply to other Hormone Replacement Therapies?**

No, this SSP only applies to Ovestin<sup>®</sup> 1mg cream.