

Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) for Quetiapine 300mg tablets – corresponding guidance on endorsement, prescription charges, remuneration and reimbursement plus Q&A.

SSP 068 for Quetiapine 300mg tablets

There are three live SSPs for this product:

- **SSP 068** – Where the duration of treatment on the prescription is for one month's supply or less and Quetiapine 300mg tablets are not available **this SSP applies.**
- SSP 069 – Where the duration of treatment on the prescription is for more than one month's supply and Quetiapine 300mg tablets are available.
- SSP 070 – Where the duration of treatment on the prescription is for more than one month's supply and Quetiapine 300mg tablets are not available.

1) Endorsement

The contractor must endorse the prescription form 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. The contractor must also select in the system the SSP item that has been supplied.

Example	Endorsement Option
<p>Example 1: Prescription for Quetiapine 300mg tablets x 28</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor supplies Quetiapine 100mg tablets x 84</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor selects in system Quetiapine 100mg tablets x 84</p>	SSP 068
<p>Example 2: Prescription for Quetiapine 300mg tablets x 28</p>	SSP 068

Pharmacy contractor supplies Quetiapine 100mg tablets x 56 and Quetiapine 50mg tablets x 56	
Pharmacy contractor selects in system Quetiapine 100mg tablets x 56 and Quetiapine 50mg tablets x 56	

Non-electronic prescription form:

Example	Endorsement
	Option
<p>Example 1: Prescription for Quetiapine 300mg tablets x 28</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor supplies Quetiapine 100mg tablets x 84</p>	<p>SSP 068</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor endorses Quetiapine 100mg tablets x 84</p>
<p>Example 2: Prescription for Quetiapine 300mg tablets x 28</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor supplies Quetiapine 100mg tablets x 56 and Quetiapine 50mg tablets x 56</p>	<p>SSP 068</p> <p>Pharmacy contractor endorses Quetiapine 100mg tablets x 56 and Quetiapine 50mg tablets x 56</p>

2) Prescription charges

Where the quantity prescribed for Quetiapine 300mg tablets is for **one month's supply or less**, pharmacy contractors must take one prescription levy per item prescribed, where supply is in accordance with this SSP 068.

3) Remuneration

Supply in accordance with this SSP 068 will result in the following fees being paid to the contractor:

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

4) Reimbursement

The supplied product in accordance with this SSP 068 will be reimbursed as if it was dispensed against a prescription. In this instance, contractors will be reimbursed the Part VIIIA reimbursement price for the quantity supplied and endorsed for the specified products and strengths listed below:

- Quetiapine 100mg tablets
- Quetiapine 50mg tablets

Q&A

Will the SSP apply to cross-border prescriptions?

Yes. Patients from England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland who present their prescriptions for Quetiapine 300mg tablets are eligible to receive a substituted product under the terms of this SSP 068.

Does the SSP apply to private prescriptions?

Yes. The scope of this SSP 068 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?

Yes, for prescriptions with a quantity of one month's supply or less, patients who are not exempt from prescription charges would continue to pay for this as usual.

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

Supply in accordance with this SSP 068 only allows supply of specific substitutions up to the duration of treatment prescribed. However, if the pharmacist thinks that an alternative product, other than those specified, 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.

How would the pharmacists determine the dosage of Quetiapine and what should be supplied in accordance with this SSP?

Where the prescribed dosage of Quetiapine is unclear, the pharmacist will need to discuss with the patient **and** use their professional judgment. When determining what should be supplied in accordance with this SSP 068.

How would pharmacists determine a one month's supply?

Where it is not clear from the prescription what constitutes a one month's supply, the pharmacist will need to discuss with the patient **and** use their professional judgment.

What should pharmacists supply if the prescription states more than one month's supply should be dispensed?

If the prescription states that more than one month's supply is to be dispensed, the pharmacist should consider if supply in accordance with either of the following two SSPs would be appropriate:

- SSP 069 – Where the duration of treatment on the prescription is for more than one month's supply and Quetiapine 300mg tablets are available.
- SSP 070 – Where the duration of treatment on the prescription is for more than one month's supply and Quetiapine 300mg tablets are not available.

Can pharmacists supply more than one month's supply?

No, in accordance with this SSP 068, pharmacists will only be able to dispense the substituted product when the prescribed duration of treatment is one month's supply or less. Patients should be made aware that under the terms of this SSP 068, the prescription will be deemed complete, and no further supply can be made from the same prescription.

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 receiving a substituted product in accordance with this SSP 068, the pharmacist should use their professional judgement to determine if other SSPs could be applicable.

Pharmacists in England must consider under their NHS terms of service if it is "reasonable and appropriate" to supply in accordance with this SSP 068 or another SSP, such as SSP 069 or SSP 070. If the pharmacist concludes that it is not reasonable or appropriate to supply the medication in accordance with any of the SSPs, 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 a substituted product, 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 mental health medicines?

No, this SSP 068 only applies to prescriptions for Quetiapine 300mg tablets.

What if the patient does not understand the change in dosage where they are receiving different strengths?

Pharmacists should be aware of the vulnerability of this patient group and take particular time to ensure the patient understands the change in the dosing regime. Pharmacists should explain the correct dosage for those patients who are receiving their Quetiapine in a different strength to that prescribed, emphasising that the effect of the medicine will be the same.

Pharmacists should use their professional judgement to select the appropriate substitution on the basis of the products available to them and the patient.

Does the SSP allow for other forms of Quetiapine to be substituted?

No, only the strengths and form of Quetiapine tablets listed above can be dispensed in accordance with this SSP 068.