



Guidance on the issue of prescriptions in response to patient concerns over stock shortages

21st January 2019

There are reports from across the region that some patients are becoming worried about the supply of their medicines post 29th March 2019. There are concerns that patients may request larger volumes on prescriptions ahead of the 29th March or request their regular prescription increasingly early.

GMMMG asks that the Greater Manchester system works together to support the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to ensure patients continue to have access to the medicines they need.

Should you be faced with such requests based on concerns about potential supply problems please reassure the patient that contingencies are in place and issue the same length of prescription at the regular due date as you would normally.

All pharmaceutical wholesalers will be holding a minimum of six weeks' additional supply, over and above their business as usual operational buffer stocks, by 29 March 2019. Companies have also been asked to make arrangements to air freight medicines with a short shelf life.

Furthermore the DHSC is providing funding for the provision of additional storage capacity for medicines and the Government has agreed that medicines and medical products will be prioritised on alternative routes of import to ensure the flow of all these products will continue unimpeded after 29 March 2019.

The DHSC and NHSE will have arrangements in place to monitor stock levels of medicines and there will be a "Serious Shortage Protocol" put in place which will involve changes to medicines legislation that will allow flexibility in primary care dispensing of medicines.

Please offer any concerned patients the reassurances as set out above and only prescribe medicines at their 'normal' due dates and in their 'usual' quantities.

Pharmacies are reminded that stockpiling of medicines locally is not helpful or appropriate.

Additional information:

- [Medicine Supply Update – letter from Dr Keith Ridge issued 17th January 2019](#)
- [Brexit operational readiness guidance for the health and care system in England 21 December 2018](#)
- [Government's preparations for a March 2019 'No Deal' scenario: an update 7th December 2018](#)