

Chief Medical Officer Directorate  
Pharmacy and Medicines Division



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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28 October 2019

Dear Colleague

## MEDICINE SUPPLY ALERT NOTICE

### Medicine in short supply: Seroxat<sup>®</sup> (paroxetine) 20mg/10ml oral solution

**Priority:** Level 2  
**Valid until:** January 2020

#### Issue

1. This Medicine Supply Alert Notice provides information regarding the supply of **Seroxat<sup>®</sup> (paroxetine) 20mg/10ml oral solution**. These will be out of stock until January 2020. This is due to manufacturing delays. Paroxetine tablets remain available from various suppliers.

#### Advice and actions

2. The following actions should be considered for patients who do not have sufficient supplies of Seroxat<sup>®</sup> (paroxetine) 20mg/10ml oral solution for the duration of the shortage:

- Prescribing paroxetine tablets in place of oral solution. UK Medicines Information (UKMi) has advised that tablets can be crushed and mixed with water for administration, however this would be an off-label use. The crushed tablets are bitter and have a slight local anaesthetic effect.
- Prescribing an unlicensed preparation of paroxetine 20mg/10ml oral solution, which is currently available to order from the following importers: Clinigen, WEP Clinical, Mawdsleys and Target Healthcare Ltd. Clinicians will need to work with local pharmacies to understand which specific unlicensed products can be sourced and the associated lead times. The price of specials varies.

3. Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must consider the relevant guidance and Health Board governance procedures. Please see the links below for further information:

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#### Addressees:

##### For action

Community Pharmacy Scotland  
Medicines Shortage Response  
Group (Scotland)  
Scottish Prescribing Advisor  
Network

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#### General Enquiries to:

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NHS Circular:  
MSAN (2019) 9

- [Prescribing unlicensed medicines](#), General Medical Council (GMC);
- [The supply of unlicensed medicinal products](#), Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA);
- [Professional Guidance for the Procurement and Supply of Specials](#), Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS).

## **Actions**

**4. Healthcare professionals are asked to note the content and actions outlined in this circular and Annex.**

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rose Marie Parr".

**Rose Marie Parr**  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer/  
Deputy Director Pharmacy & Medicines Division

**ANNEX A**

**CLASSIFICATION OF MEDICINE SHORTAGES**

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL RESPONSES
Level one (low impact)	Supply problem with a short duration ( <b>up to one month</b> ) where <u>immediately available measures are expected to be sufficient</u> and there is minimal additional management requirement.	<p>Business as usual. Response likely to involve using the same medicine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative strength/formulation available to meet demand, potentially from other suppliers.</li> </ul>
Level two (medium impact)	Supply problem where <u>alternatives in the same therapeutic class are available but which may require some management</u> such as switching to those alternatives, which may include unlicensed medicines.	<p>Business as usual. Response not likely to require a change in the class of medicine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative strength/formulation available but clinical advice is required to help manage the switch.</li> <li>Alternative medicine in the same therapeutic class.</li> <li>Unlicensed alternatives may be used.</li> <li>Issuing a Medicine Supply Alert Notice.</li> </ul>
Level three (high impact)	<p>Supply problems where there are <u>limited or no alternatives in the same therapeutic class and which require significant management</u>, potentially including changes in clinical practice or operational direction or that have patient safety implications.</p> <p>Level three shortages also include level two shortages for medicines used in <u>life saving conditions</u> such as anaphylaxis or involving <u>patient groups considered as vulnerable</u>, such as neonates, paediatrics or people with learning disabilities.</p>	<p>Serious shortage situation. Response likely to require a change in the class of medicine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative therapeutic class of medicine available.</li> <li>The use of a 'serious shortage protocol'.</li> <li>Additional clinical advice.</li> <li>Exceptional MHRA regulatory measures.</li> <li>Issuing a Medicine Supply Alert Notice.</li> </ul>
Level four (critical impact)	Supply problems where there is <u>no viable therapeutic alternative</u> and where responses may also require support from outside the health system and / or which trigger the use of national resilience structures.	<p>Very serious shortage situation. Wider burden on NHS and public sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-medicine support provided to patients.</li> <li>National Resilience procedures potentially activated – including links with agencies outside NHS. Additional project management or communications support may be required.</li> <li>Issuing a Medicine Supply Alert Notice.</li> </ul>