

Unlicensed Specials – Interim Advice during COVID-19 Outbreak

Version 4 (2nd Feb 2022)

We have reviewed the current Specials process in light of COVID-19 and the increased workload and potential staff shortages both within Community Pharmacies and NHS Forth Valley Pharmacy Services.

The following amended process has been put in place to help ensure that Community Pharmacists are able to obtain Specials for their patients where clinically required with the minimum of bureaucracy. We will keep the interim process under review as the situation with COVID-19 develops and issue updates when necessary.

All communication regarding unlicensed Specials should be directed to the Specials mailbox: fv.fvspecials@nhs.scot

NB: All requests must be sent from **your Pharmacy Shared NHSmail account** to ensure patient confidentiality.

For existing authorisations which have expired, price increased or quantity changed

- Confirm whether an unlicensed Special is still necessary or whether an alternative licensed product would meet the patient's needs. Discuss with the GP or Primary Care Pharmacist associated with the Practice.
- **If the price has remained the same or is within 20% of the previously authorised price, and an unlicensed Special is still clinically necessary**, the item can be obtained as before. Email fv.fvspecials@nhs.scot attaching the FV Unlicensed Specials Authorisation Request Form completed with the patient's CHI number, item obtained, quantity prescribed, dose, price, date ordered, existing authorisation code and the GP Practice. This will allow us to update our database.
 - The authorisation will be extended for a 12 month period.
 - Where the **quantity** has changed a new authorisation code will be issued.
- If the price has increased by more than 20% of the previously authorised price; after checking that the previous price cannot be obtained elsewhere:
 - Email fv.fvspecials@nhs.scot attaching the FV Unlicensed Specials Authorisation Request Form completed with the patient's CHI number, item obtained, quantity prescribed, dose, new price quoted, GP Practice and previous authorisation code and associated price. Include your Pharmacy Contractor Code and contact telephone number in your email (we would suggest this is added to your email signature).
 - Someone from the Prescribing Support Team will review the information and either email back with confirmation of authorisation or to discuss further.
 - In the event that you do not hear back from the Prescribing Support Team within 1 working day and the patient needs the item urgently, the item may be ordered **on a one-off basis**. Email fv.fvspecials@nhs.scot with all of the details as above.

For new authorisations:

- Check first whether an unlicensed Special is actually necessary or whether an alternative licensed product would meet the patient's needs. Discuss with the GP or Primary Care Pharmacist associated with the Practice.
- Where the unlicensed Special is clinically necessary:
 - Email fv.fvspecials@nhs.scot from your Pharmacy Shared NHSmail account with the appropriately completed FV Unlicensed Specials Authorisation Request Form .
 - **Someone from the Prescribing Support Team will review the information and either email back with confirmation of authorisation or discuss further.**
 - In the event that you do not hear back from the Prescribing Support Team within 1 working day and the patient needs the item urgently, the item may be ordered **on a one-off basis**. Email fv.fvspecials@nhs.scot with all of the details as above.

In all cases:

- Check first whether an unlicensed Special is actually required or whether an alternative licensed product would meet the patient's needs.
- Discuss with the GP or Primary Care Pharmacist associated with the GP Practice.
- NHS Production sites are recommended to be used in the first instance (eg NHS Scotland Pharmaceutical 'Specials' Service (01382 496702); or Oxford: (01865 904141))