

June 2021

PSNC Briefing 011/21: Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) updated endorsing guidance

Introduction

For products supplied in accordance with a Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP), correct endorsements, as set out in Part II Clause 9E of the [Drug Tariff](#), are required to claim the relevant remuneration and reimbursement. From 1 June 2021, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has approved the use of a new endorsement to claim for any supplies made in accordance with an SSP. **The new endorsement uses the code 'SSP' followed by the three-digit reference number applicable to the SSP for example, SSP007 for Fluoxetine 30mg capsules would be endorsed as 'SSP 007'.**

To allow for implementation of this new SSP endorsement functionality, a transition period (1 June - 5 October) has been agreed to enable use of the existing 'NCSO' endorsement until the beginning of October 2021 (to include September SSP claims, submitted by the 5 October). During the transition period, the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) will accept either the new 'SSP' or existing 'NCSO' endorsement for any SSP claims submitted using electronic prescriptions, EPS tokens or FP10 paper prescriptions.

After the transition period only the new SSP endorsement will be accepted by the NHSBSA on electronic and paper prescriptions. Any SSP claims made using EPS tokens after October 2021 will no longer be accepted for payment.

Details of the new SSP endorsement and transitional arrangements are outlined in the [Drug Tariff](#) (Part II Clause 9E). When supplying in accordance with these SSPs, contractors should refer to the updated endorsement guidance for each SSP available on [NHSBSA's SSP page](#).

Why has a new endorsement for SSPs been introduced?

When SSPs were first introduced in 2019, the use of the 'NCSO' endorsement was agreed as a temporary workaround to claim for supplies made in accordance with an SSP. Since then, work has been underway by the NHSBSA and NHS Digital to introduce the new SSP endorsement functionality into dispensing systems.

Although most dispensing systems now have this new SSP endorsement functionality, its availability will depend on the speed of its roll-out to users by system suppliers. From June 2021, contractors are encouraged to start using this new SSP endorsement functionality, where available, to claim for any supplies made in accordance with SSPs. If the new SSP endorsement functionality is not yet available to users of certain dispensing systems, contractors can continue to use the existing 'NCSO' endorsement option until the beginning of October 2021 (to include September SSP claims, submitted by the 5 October).

What endorsements are required to indicate supply against an SSP?

Endorsements to apply will depend on the type of SSP granted. There are two types of SSPs that may be granted:

- **Single Dispensed Product SSP** – where a prescribed item is replaced by one replacement item
- **Multiple Dispensed Product SSP** – where a prescribed item is replaced by two or more items (for example, SSP007 for Fluoxetine 30mg capsules allows for the 10mg and 20mg capsules to be supplied instead of the prescribed Fluoxetine 30mg capsules), some dispensing systems may accommodate the new SSP endorsements for both replacement items whereas other systems may only accommodate endorsement of one replacement item. Where only one of the replacement products can be endorsed, the NHSBSA will add and reimburse the other replacement items.

The required endorsements may be applied:

- For an electronic prescription
 1. to the Electronic Reimbursement Endorsement Message (EREM); or
 2. on the printed EPS dispensing token (**only until 5 October 2021**)
- For a paper prescription - to the paper prescription itself

Note: In addition to the new ‘SSP’ endorsement (for example, ‘SSP 007’) or ‘NCSO’, the other specific endorsement requirements may vary for each SSP, and contractors are strongly advised to follow the relevant supporting endorsement guidance issued with each SSP. Pharmacy contractors should also ensure the correct prescription charge or exemption declaration is completed on the EREM, token or paper prescription before submitting an SSP claim to the NHSBSA.

Endorsements for a Single Dispensed Product SSP – where a prescribed item is replaced by one replacement item

Using the example of SSP05 for Fluoxetine 10mg tablets, which allows for the equivalent capsule formulation to be supplied instead of Fluoxetine 10mg tablets specified on the prescription, the following table outlines how to apply SSP endorsements for supplies made in accordance with this Single Dispensed Product SSP using:

1. **Electronic prescription issued for Fluoxetine 10mg tablets x 30 tablets, the EREM should be endorsed as follows if the alternative Fluoxetine 10mg capsules are supplied against SSP05:**

SSP endorsement available on systems	NCSO* endorsement available on systems (if SSP endorsement unavailable)	No SSP or NCSO* endorsement for EPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSP 005 • Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules <p><i>Note that for endorsement purposes, SSP05 should be endorsed as SSP 005</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCSO, Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules <p><i>*NCSO endorsement to be used during transition period until beginning of October 2021 (i.e. for September’s prescriptions claimed by 5 October)</i></p>	<p>Print corresponding EPS dispensing token and endorse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSP 005 • Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCSO, Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules <p><i>*NCSO endorsement to be used during transition period until beginning of October 2021 (i.e. for September’s prescriptions claimed by 5 October)</i></p>

Note: SSP- or NCSO-endorsed EPS dispensing tokens must be placed in the red separator (preferably tied with an elastic band) at the top of the bundle when submitted to the NHSBSA for processing.

2. **Paper prescription forms** - pharmacy teams must endorse the prescription form with the following information:

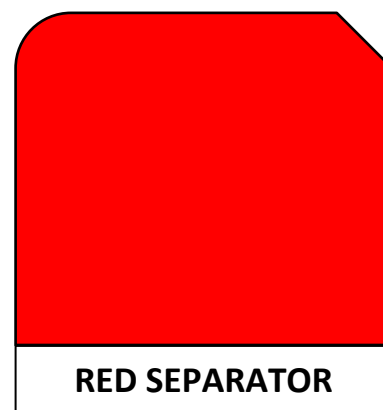
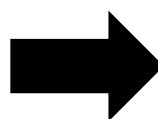
- **SSP and the three-digit reference number of the specific SSP** (in this example that would be “SSP 005”) or ‘NCSO’
(Note. Use of NCSO endorsement for SSPs is being phased out and will not be accepted after October 2021)
- **Details of replacement product supplied in accordance with the SSP** (drug name, strength, formulation)
- **Quantity of replacement product supplied**

Using the example of SSP05, paper prescription forms issued for Fluoxetine 10mg tablets x 30 tablets, should be endorsed as follows if the alternative Fluoxetine 10mg capsules are supplied against SSP05:

SSP endorsement	OR	NCSO endorsement (until 5 October 2021)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSP 005 • Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules <p><i>Note that for endorsement purposes, SSP05 should be endorsed as SSP 005</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCSO, Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules

Note: SSP or NCSO-endorsed paper FP10 prescriptions must be placed in the red separator (preferably tied with an elastic band) at the top of the bundle when submitted to the NHSBSA for processing.

SSP005 30 x Fluoxetine 10mg capsules	Fluoxetine 10mg tablets 30 tablets One tablet daily
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Endorsements for Multiple Dispensed Product SSPs – where a prescribed item is replaced by two or more items

Using the example of SSP007 for Fluoxetine 30mg capsules which allows for the 10mg and 20mg capsules to be supplied instead of Fluoxetine 30mg capsules specified on the prescription, the following table outlines how to apply SSP endorsements for supplies made in accordance with this Multiple Dispensed Product SSP using:

1. **Electronic prescription forms** issued for Fluoxetine 30mg capsules x 30 capsules, the EREM should be endorsed as follows if the alternatives Fluoxetine 10mg capsules and Fluoxetine 20mg capsules are supplied against SSP007:

SSP endorsement functionality available and system CAN accommodate SSP endorsements for multiple products supplied for a single prescribed item	SSP endorsement functionality available but system CANNOT accommodate SSP endorsements for multiple products supplied for a single prescribed item i.e. only one replacement product can be endorsed	NCSO endorsement functionality available and system CAN accommodate the NCSO endorsement for multiple products supplied (until October 2021)	NCSO endorsement functionality available but system CANNOT accommodate NCSO endorsement for multiple products supplied for a single prescribed item i.e. only one replacement product can be endorsed (until October 2021)	No electronic NCSO or SSP endorsement functionality available during the transition period (until October 2021)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSP 007 Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules SSP 007 Fluoxetine 20mg capsules x 30 capsules 	<p>Endorse ONE of the replacement items supplied in accordance with a Multiple Dispensed Product SSP. NHSBSA will reimburse for the remaining product not endorsed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSP 007 Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules <p>The other replacement item, Fluoxetine 20mg capsules x 30, would be added and reimbursed by the NHSBSA.</p> <p><i>Alternatively, Fluoxetine 20mg capsules can be endorsed with SSP and the three-digit reference number. Fluoxetine 10mg capsules would be added and reimbursed by the NHSBSA.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCSO, Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules/Fluoxetine 20mg capsules x 30 capsules 	<p>Endorse ONE of the replacement items supplied in accordance with a Multiple Dispensed Product SSP. NHSBSA will reimburse for the remaining product not endorsed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCSO, Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules <p>The other replacement item, Fluoxetine 20mg capsules x 30, would be added and reimbursed by the NHSBSA.</p> <p><i>Alternatively, Fluoxetine 20mg capsules can be endorsed with NCSO. Fluoxetine 10mg capsules would be added and reimbursed by the NHSBSA.</i></p>	<p>Print corresponding EPS dispensing token and endorse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSP 007 Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules Fluoxetine 20mg capsules x 30 capsules <p><i>SSP-endorsed EPS tokens must be placed in the red separator (preferably tied with an elastic band) at the top of the bundle when submitted to the NHSBSA for processing.</i></p>

2. Paper prescription forms - pharmacy teams must endorse the prescription form with the following information:

- **SSP and the three-digit reference number of the specific SSP** (in this example that would be “SSP 007”) or ‘NCSO’ (until 5 October 2021);
- **Details of replacement products supplied in accordance with the SSP** (drug name, strength, formulation); and
- **Quantity supplied for each replacement product**

Using the example of SSP007, paper prescription forms issued for Fluoxetine 30mg capsules x 30 capsules, contractors should be endorsed as follows if the alternatives Fluoxetine 10mg capsules and Fluoxetine 20mg capsules are supplied against SSP007:

SSP endorsement	OR	NCSO endorsement (until 5 October 2021)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSP 007 • Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules • Fluoxetine 20mg capsules x 30 capsules 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCSO, Fluoxetine 10mg capsules x 30 capsules/Fluoxetine 20mg capsules x 30 capsules

Note: SSP or NCSO-endorsed paper FP10 prescriptions must be placed in the red separator (preferably tied with an elastic band) at the top of the bundle when submitted to the NHSBSA for processing.



Note: SSP007, also allows pharmacists to supply 3 x Fluoxetine 10mg capsules for every prescribed Fluoxetine 30mg capsule prescribed.

Replacement SSP products not listed in Part VIII of the Drug Tariff

a. Non-Part VIII product(s) supplied against a Single Dispensed Product SSP

If the replacement SSP product is not listed in Part VIII of the Drug Tariff, contractors are reminded to endorse the prescription or token with the following:

- **SSP and the three-digit reference number of the specific SSP**, or ‘NCSO’ (until 5 October 2021);
- the quantity dispensed (if different to the quantity prescribed);
- the pack size used;
- the brand name or name of the manufacturer or wholesaler from whom the supply was purchased (if the order is in the ‘generic’ or pharmacopeial form); and
- Invoice price (if no list price is displayed on the NHS Dictionary of Medicines and Devices (dm+d))

b. Non-Part VIII product(s) supplied against a Multiple Dispensed Product SSP

- If a non-Part VIII product is one of the replacement SSP products supplied in accordance with a Multiple Dispensed Product SSP, the non-Part VIII product must be the one endorsed (as above) in preference to any replacement SSP products listed in Part VIII of the Drug Tariff.
- If two or more replacement SSP products supplied in accordance with a Multiple Dispensed Product SSP are non-Part VIII products, at least one must be endorsed (as above) in

accordance with the SSP. If the dispensing system only allows endorsement of one non-Part VIII product, the other replacement non-Part VIII product(s) would be added and reimbursed by the NHSBSA based on a price pre-determined by DHSC following consultation with PSNC.

Further support and guidance

PSNC aim to support contractors in the implementation of SSPs and further guidance may be published in due course for each SSP issued by HM Government.

If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information, please contact as follows depending on the nature of your query:

- **Reimbursement and endorsement issues** – Suraj Shah, Drug Tariff and Reimbursement Manager (Suraj.Shah@psnc.org.uk) and/or PSNC's Dispensing and Supply Team (info@psnc.org.uk)
- **EPS and IT issues** – Daniel Ah-Thion, Community Pharmacy IT Lead including PMR supplier queries (Daniel.Ah-Thion@psnc.org.uk)
- **Legislation and regulatory issues** – Gordon Hockey, Director of Operations and Support (Gordon.Hockey@psnc.org.uk) or Layla Rahman, Regulations Officer (Layla.Rahman@psnc.org.uk)
- **Media enquiries** – PSNC's Communications Team (commsteam@psnc.org.uk)