

November 2021

## PSNC Briefing 049/21: Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP): SSP014 – Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg

### Introduction

This PSNC Briefing provides information on the Serious Shortage Protocol (SSP) for Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg issued by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on 20 October 2020. **SSP014** will enable community pharmacists in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to supply patients with generic Sulfasalazine against a prescription for Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg.

For prescriptions (NHS or private) requesting:	Supply permitted under SSP014:
Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg	Generic Sulfasalazine 500mg gastro-resistant (GR) tablets

**SSP014** allows for **generic Sulfasalazine 500mg gastro-resistant (GR) tablets** to be supplied, if Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg, specified on the prescription, is unobtainable. The duration of treatment would remain as prescribed.

Pharmacists are required to read and comply with the requirements outlined within the individual SSP as published on the [NHSBSA website](#). This briefing is only intended as a short guide to read in conjunction with [PSNC's SSP guide for community pharmacy teams](#).

This SSP commenced on 26 November 2021 and is currently due to expire on 20 December 2021; the expiry date may be brought forward or extended so the validity of the SSP should be checked on the [NHSBSA website](#), as appropriate.

### Key points

1. Pharmacists who receive a prescription for Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg **must** consider SSP014.
2. The supervising pharmacist **may** supply the alternative strength and quantity – having exercised his/her professional skill and judgement – he/she is of the opinion the supply is reasonable and appropriate for the patient, and the patient agrees and consents to the alternative supply.
3. There are **additional considerations** associated with supply under an SSP, for example:
  - a. **Dosage** should remain as originally prescribed;
  - b. Under these SSPs the total **quantity** supplied should be equivalent to the duration of treatment as the original prescription;
  - c. **Labelling** should include 'supplied against SSP number [state number]';
  - d. **Claiming/endorsement** – see additional endorsement guidance below;
  - e. **Record-keeping** – the alternative supply should be recorded on the PMR/as per your usual SOP;

- f. GP notification is not required for these SSPs but may be professionally/clinically appropriate in certain cases;
- g. **Patient consent/agreement** – if a patient declines the alternative under an SSP you should advise them to return to the prescriber; and
- h. All prescriptions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are covered under these SSPs, including hospital and private prescriptions.

## Endorsements

To ensure correct payments (fees and reimbursement) for any supplies made against this SSP, the contractor must endorse the prescription form, EPS Token or Electronic Reimbursement Endorsement Message (EREM) as per Clause 9, Part II of the Drug Tariff. **When supplying in accordance with these SSPs, contractors should refer to the updated endorsement guidance for each SSP available on [NHSBSA's SSP page](#).**

Please see below the required endorsements for this SSP:

- **'SSP 014' or 'NCSO'** – to indicate that the supply was made in accordance with an SSP. For endorsement purposes, SSP014 should be endorsed as SSP 014. Pharmacist can refer to PSNC's article on 28 July regarding [how to properly endorse using EPS](#). (Note. A transition period (1 June 2021 – 31 January 2022) has been agreed to enable use of the existing 'NCSO' endorsement until the end of January. During the transition period, the 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.)
- **Details of replacement product supplied in accordance with the SSP where applicable** (drug name, strength, formulation)
- **Quantity of replacement product supplied.**

See below worked endorsement example for a supply made under SSP014 on paper prescription or EPS Token:

Prescription for	Pharmacy contractor supplied under SSP014	Endorsement example	
Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg	Generic Sulfasalazine 500mg gastro-resistant (GR) tablets	<b>SSP014</b>	Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg 112 tablets One four times a day

If the contractor chooses to endorse the EPS Token instead of the EREM, then they will need to indicate on the EREM either "ND" or "Not dispensed" and then proceed with the endorsement on the EPS Token. Please see below the required endorsements for this SSP.

SSP endorsed FP10 paper prescriptions and EPS Tokens must be placed at the front of the red separator (preferably tied with an elastic band) when submitted to the NHSBSA for processing. **DO NOT** place SSP-endorsed Tokens with other Tokens submitted as part of usual end of month submission process (Tokens with paid and exempt status declaration except for age-exempt patients).

See below worked endorsement example for a supply made under SSP014 on electronic prescription:

Where **'SSP' endorsement functionality is available** on the dispensing system the contractor must select SSP, select the appropriate pack in the system and input/endorse the three-digit reference number.

Prescription for	Pharmacy contractor supplies and <u>selects in system pack of</u>	Endorsement example
Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg x 112	Sulfasalazine 500mg gastro-resistant (GR) tablets x 112	SSP 014

Where '**SSP endorsement functionality is NOT available**' on the dispensing system, but the contractor is able to use the 'NCSO' functionality for SSPs then endorse 'NCSO' and supply the additional information as detailed in the table below. Note: there should be no spaces in between the wording for the endorsement options as outlined in the table below

Prescription for	Pharmacy contractor supplied	Endorsement example
Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg x 112	Sulfasalazine 500mg gastro-resistant (GR) tablets x 112	NCSO

See our [PSNC Briefing 011/21: Serious Shortage Protocols \(SSPs\) updated endorsing](#) for the full endorsement guidance.

## Record keeping

There is no separate formal declaration required of monthly SSP claims submitted on the FP34C submission document or via the digital submission form using Manage Your Service (MYS). Contractors are advised to keep a record of all monthly SSP claims submitted for payment (including any 'SSP'/'NCSO'-endorsed paper prescriptions, Tokens and electronic claim messages) for reconciliation against the Schedule of Payments.

## Prescription charges

For each item, only **one** prescription charge will be applicable for patients who are not exempt from prescription charges. The only circumstance in which patients would not have to pay for a prescription charge is where an SSP requires a lower quantity to be supplied. Please note that the SSP for Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg does not allow for a lower quantity to be supplied, so patients will continue to pay prescription charges (unless they are already exempt).

## Reimbursement and remuneration

Reimbursement is for the medicine supplied in accordance with the SSP and not the originally prescribed medicine i.e. in this instance contractors will be reimbursed the Drug Tariff Part VIIIA reimbursement price for the generic Sulfasalazine 500mg gastro-resistant (GR) tablets (or any concessionary price granted, where applicable). The reimbursement price will account for VAT payment. Supply in accordance with the SSP will result in the following fees being paid to the contractor:

- One Single Activity fee (currently £1.29)
- One SSP fee (£5.35)

## Top Tips

- NHSBSA advise that contractor SSP claims should be clear and unambiguous and follow the protocol guidelines – NHSBSA processing staff must be able to determine what has been supplied.
- Ensure that the dispensed notification messages for all EPS SSP claims are submitted on time each month and before the expiry date of the SSP. View our [SSP submission reminder](#) to ensure your SSP claims are appropriately submitted to NHSBSA for reimbursement.
- Provided that supplies are made within the expiry date of the SSP014, any SSP claims will continue to be accepted for up to three calendar months after expiry or withdrawal of the SSP. For example, SSP for Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg, which is due to expire on **20 December 2021**, the NHSBSA would look for the 'SSP'/'NCSO' endorsement in the December batch (submitted by 5 January) right up to the February batch (submitted by the 5 March). Please note that **SSPs cannot be supplied past the period of SSP validity**. Any other items on the same prescription form (including any items that are owing) can continue to be dispensed as usual but must be submitted for payment within three months of expiry of the SSP.
- Pharmacy teams are advised to submit SSP claims using the EPS Token if the PMR systems do not support/capture all the SSP endorsement requirements for a valid 'SSP'/'NCSO' claim.
- If using the EPS Token to submit SSP claims, remember need to indicate on the EREM or electronic claim message either "ND" or "Not dispensed" and then proceed with the endorsement on the EPS Token to avoid double-claiming.
- Where available, use the claim amend facility on your PMR system to rectify any incorrect EPS claims already submitted within a calendar month.
- Check that the correct number of patient charges are collected and declared on the end of month FP34C submission form.
- Any paper prescriptions or Tokens with SSP claims need to be placed in a red separator (and kept separate from other Tokens for non-payment i.e. with paid/exempt status).
- Pharmacy contractors are advised to keep a record of all SSP claims submitted each month to reconcile against the Schedule of Payments.
- For guidance on SSPs in Wales, click [here](#).
- For guidance on SSPs in Northern Ireland, click [here](#).

## SSP FAQs

### Q. Can I obtain and supply the unlicensed Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg against the SSP?

A. No. Supply of unlicensed tablets are not covered by SSP014 for Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg. The need for an unlicensed product needs to be determined by the prescriber. If the unlicensed product is required, the prescription would need to specify 'Salazopyrin® EN-Tabs 500mg (Special Order)' and the prescription needs to be endorsed as a Non-Part VIIIIB special.

### Q. How can I check if I have been correctly paid for any supplies made under SSPs?

A. The total of any SSP fees paid will appear on your monthly Schedule of Payment under 'SSP Remuneration (SSP fees)'. The 'SSP reimbursement' field will indicate the total VAT element only applicable to any supplies made under SSPs. Contractors are strongly advised to keep a monthly record of all supplies made against SSPs to reconcile against the Schedule of Payments.

## Resources

[PSNC Briefing 011/21](#) - This PSNC Briefing relates to the updated endorsing guidance for SSPs

[PSNC Briefing 023/19](#) - This PSNC Briefing describes how SSPs will work in practice and provides guidance on what you need to do if an SSP is put in place.

[NHSBSA SSP page](#)

If you have any queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information, please contact:

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