

Health Secretary meets with HRT suppliers to resolve supply issues

- Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid today met with key suppliers to discuss boosting hormone replacement therapy (HRT) supply to meet demand now and in the future
- Manufacturers outlined the steps they're taking to boost supply and pharmacists shared their experiences on the frontline, as well as sharing their thoughts on wider solutions including improved communications
- Meeting follows series of actions from government to ensure more women can access the HRT they need

Urgent action continues to be taken to ensure women across the UK will be able to more reliably access HRT products.

The Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid reiterated his commitment to address HRT supply issues when he and Madelaine McTernan, head of the HRT supply taskforce, met with representatives from the supply, wholesale, and community pharmacy sector today (5 May).

Meeting with Aspen Pharmacare, Besins-Healthcare, Gedeon Richter, Novartis, Novo Nordisk, Orion, Pfizer, Theramex, Viatrix, and representatives from community pharmacies, the government confirmed its intention to work with industry to do what is necessary to fix the HRT supply issue and listen to the experiences from industry and community pharmacy representatives and what they think needs to be done to improve the current situation for patients.

Rising demand has contributed to some of the supply challenges, but other factors may also impact supply, related to manufacturing, capacity constraints and commercial decisions. The Health and Social Care Secretary wanted to understand the issues facing suppliers and what can be done to address them.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I want to continue to reassure women that I am listening to their concerns. Meeting with key stakeholders and suppliers is one of many steps we are taking to ensure women can access the HRT they need.

We will leave no stone unturned in our national mission to boost supply of HRT. Along with appointing Madelaine McTernan as head of the HRT supply taskforce to implement lessons learned from the pandemic, and ensuring prescriptions are issued in shorter cycles for now, we are working collectively with the sector to urgently resolve this issue.

Head of the HRT Supply Taskforce Madelaine McTernan said:

The collaborative and constructive discussions today focused on what action can be taken swiftly to improve the near term situation as well as ensuring longer term changes to ensure these key products can continue to be delivered reliably and efficiently.

I was heartened by the positive input from all attendees and look forward to building on this.

Women's Health Minister Maria Caulfield said:

I know HRT can be a lifeline for women suffering from severe menopause symptoms.

We are doing everything in our power to make sure women can continue to access the HRT they need to continue living their life, unrestricted by the menopause.

This comes as last week the Health and Social Care Secretary issued Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) to limit the dispensing of three HRT products to three months' supply. This will save time for patients, pharmacists and prescribers and will even out distribution of in demand for products such as oestrogel.

Vaccine taskforce director general Madelaine McTernan was also recently appointed to spearhead a new HRT supply taskforce, applying lessons learned from the successful procurement seen during the Covid vaccination programme to identify ways to support the HRT supply chain ensuring it can meet both short and long term demand. Additional members of the vaccine taskforce will also be redeployed to support this work as the government doubles down its efforts to ensure women can access high quality menopause treatment, including HRT.