

Further action taken to improve supply of HRT

- Head of the HRT Supply Taskforce and industry identify immediate actions to improve short term supply and ensure ongoing stability
- Further Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) issued to provide flexibility for pharmacists to substitute for appropriate products

Urgent action continues to be taken to improve supply of HRT products, helping those who need it access vital medicine.

Since the government has been working to resolve HRT supply and brought in measures to do so – such as SSPs for certain products as well as appointing Madelaine McTernan as Head of the HRT Supply Taskforce – access to HRT is improving, helping those who need it access vital medicine.

Availability of Premique Low Dose has improved thanks to SSPs issued on 29 April to restrict dispensing for Oestrogel, Ovestin and Premique Low Dose to three months' supply. Since these measures were implemented, further deliveries of all three products have been made, with Premique Low Dose returning to good availability this week. The manufacturers of Oestrogel and Ovestin, as well as suppliers of alternative HRT products, are taking action to increase UK supply.

Following positive engagement with pharmacists, the government has issued further SSPs to allow pharmacists the flexibility to safely offer women substitute high-demand products – Oestrogel, Ovestin cream, Lenzetto transdermal spray and Sandrena gel sachets – with appropriate alternatives, such as transdermal patches, which are in good supply.

Giving women the option to substitute products is a safe, effective way to ensure HRT continues to be available for everyone who needs it and women can continue to manage their menopausal symptoms. Anyone who has questions or concerns about HRT should speak to their GP or pharmacist. Clinical advice for these SSPs was taken from national experts including clinicians from the British Menopause Society and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

SSPs restricting prescriptions to a maximum of three months' supply will also be issued for substitute products, as a precautionary measure to ensure the supply of those substitutes is maintained.

The move follows engagement between the Head of HRT Supply Taskforce, Madelaine McTernan, and the sector on measures to ensure the efficient use of current stock as well as increasing supply, both in the near term as well as providing stability for the future.

Meetings have also resulted in some suppliers taking swift action to secure additional stock of HRT products which are experiencing shortages resulting in good supply of Premique Low Dose which previously experienced shortages.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We are working to ensure HRT is available for everyone who needs it and I am pleased to see suppliers continuing to increase the supply of some products which is a testament to the collaborative approach being taken.

Meetings with suppliers are ongoing and we're taking decisive action to manage HRT supply issues and reduce any delays – this includes issuing further SSPs so that women are able to access the medication they need.

Head of the HRT Supply Taskforce Madelaine McTernan said:

I am very encouraged by the constructive engagement across the sector and enthusiasm with which suppliers and pharmacists are looking to work with us to meet this challenge.

Focusing both on measures that ensure we can use stocks most efficiently whilst also ensuring supply is increased is critical”.

Minister for Women's Health, Maria Caulfield said:

Improving stability of supply is another key measure in increasing support for menopausal and per-menopausal women to improve their quality of life.

Women's health is a priority for this government – we're working around the clock to ensure supply of HRT is stable now, and in the long-term.

NHSE guidance makes clear prescribers are not limited by formulary lists and are not prevented from prescribing a wider range of products.

The [British Menopause Society](#) resource on HRT supply provides information on choosing alternative HRT products. Furthermore, information on which formulations are most appropriate for different populations and comorbidities can be found on the [NICE website](#).

NHS England encourages prescribers to check the availability of HRT products before prescribing, by reviewing the [NHS England Specialist Pharmacy Service website](#) liaising with local pharmacies to identify available stocks and agreeing suitable alternatives where necessary.

MHRA has reminded both HRT manufacturers and suppliers of the action they can take to ease supply shortages and has supplemented existing guidance on these by holding workshops on 16 May with representatives of manufacturers, community pharmacies and wholesalers to ensure these provisions are

understood. This includes confirming that pharmacies have the flexibility to share medicines, where appropriate. MHRA are also working to consolidate their guidance so that it is available from a single webpage and this will be available shortly.

The vast majority of HRT products remain available, and alternatives are available for any products affected by supply issues.

- On 29 April the Health and Social Care Secretary issued three SSPs to [restrict dispensing for Oestrogel, Ovestin and Premique Low Dose to three months' supply]([Three-month limit for 3 HRT products to ensure continued access – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#))
- [Further SSPs have been issued](#) to allow community pharmacists, in consultation with patients, to supply specified alternatives to the prescribed HRT products without needing to seek authorisation from the clinician who has prescribed the medicine. Clinical advice for these SSPs was taken from national experts including clinicians from the British Menopause Society and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Further SSPs have been issued to limit dispensing to three months' supply for the two substitute products, estradiol patches and estriol cream, to ensure that supply is maintained
- This is not an indication that these products are out of stock but will provide greater flexibility for pharmacists and to ensure more people can continue to access the medication they need.
- The products that may be substituted if unavailable are Oestrogel, Ovestin cream, Lenzetto 1.53mg transdermal spray and Sandrena 0.5mg and 1mg gel sachets.
- More detail on the Health Secretary, Madelaine McTernan and Minister Caulfield's [meeting with suppliers and manufacturers](#)
- [MHRA guidance](#) allows the transfer of medicines between pharmacies without the need to hold a WDA (wholesaler/dealer license) provided: it takes place on an occasional basis; the quantity of medicines supplied is small; the supply is made on a not for profit basis; and the supply is not for onward wholesale distribution.

[PM call with President Erdoğan: 20 May 2022](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Turkey's President Erdoğan this evening.



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They shared their deep concern at the ongoing Russian onslaught on Ukraine and its far-reaching consequences for the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region and wider world.

The Prime Minister welcomed Turkey's leading role in addressing the crisis, and they agreed to work together to unlock vital supply routes for Ukrainian grain stocks and alleviate rising global food prices.

On the issue of NATO expansion, the Prime Minister highlighted the threat posed by Russia to its European neighbours and emphasised that Finland and Sweden would be valuable additions to the NATO alliance.

He encouraged President Erdoğan to work with Swedish, Finnish and NATO counterparts to address any concerns ahead of the summit in Madrid next month, and said the UK stands ready to support.

The leaders also welcomed the UK and Turkey's growing defence, security and trade partnership. The Prime Minister noted that trade between our two countries increased by £3bn last year and could be further strengthened.

The Prime Minister and President Erdoğan looked forward to meeting in person at the earliest opportunity.

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[Calling for a strengthening of global](#)

resilience to food insecurity

Thank you, President, and I join others in thanking you for convening the debate today. And I also thank our briefers for their very insightful remarks.

At the start of the year, the UN's Global Humanitarian Overview warned of unprecedented levels of global food insecurity, driven by a perfect storm of COVID-19, the climate crisis and conflict.

Yemen faces catastrophic levels of food insecurity for the fifth year running.

Refugees across the Sahel are suffering from increased violence and reduced humanitarian access.

And in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Ethiopia and Somalia, millions of people affected by conflict are also grappling with the worst drought in 40 years.

Russia ignored this suffering in choosing to invade Ukraine, the breadbasket of the world.

Ukraine's food and fertiliser exports were feeding up to 400 million people worldwide.

And now, a critical part of the world's food supply chain is being throttled by Russia.

Across the world, 13 million hungry children, already subsisting on a knife-edge – of those, 2 million now face starvation this year.

As our Minister explained yesterday, the UK fully supports the US-led 'Roadmap for Global Food Security' and the Global Alliance launched under Germany's G7 Presidency.

We have the food and the means to help the most vulnerable, but we must act now.

First, the international community must enable the free-movement of food.

Alongside over 50 WTO members, the UK has committed to keeping food and agricultural markets open, predictable and transparent.

All WTO members must prohibit export restrictions on food bought for the World Food Programme.

Second, it is vital that we strengthen global resilience to prevent future famine risks.

As we set out in the UK's International Development Strategy, which we

launched this week, the UK will support the most vulnerable countries with over \$3.5 billion of humanitarian aid in the next three years.

British International Investment – the UK’s development finance institution – will scale up high-quality and sustainable investments, including in the food and agricultural sector.

And the World Bank must deliver swiftly on its plans to strengthen fragile economies by distributing \$170 billion over the next 15 months.

Finally, actors on the ground need to live up to their responsibilities, under international humanitarian law. We will continue to pursue accountability of those using starvation as a weapon of war.

President,

This man-made global crisis requires a collective, global response.

The UK stands in solidarity with vulnerable countries and will play its part.

Russia must now play theirs: end the conflict and the global shocks it is inflicting on the world’s poorest.

I thank you.

G7 health ministers unite to protect world from another pandemic

- Commitments also made on tackling antimicrobial resistance – a global killer costing millions of lives a year
- Focus on climate and health will see G7 countries lead the way in reducing greenhouse gases and improving health and wellbeing

A landmark pact signed by G7 health ministers in Berlin will help ensure the world is better prepared for future pandemics.

The G7 Pact for Pandemic Readiness will see the UK, USA, Japan, Canada, France, Germany, and Italy work more closely together – and with relevant multilateral organisations like the World Health Organisation – by sharing the best of their Covid inspired initiatives, including those on surveillance and rapid response.

Commitments were also made by health ministers to tackle the silent pandemic of antimicrobial resistance AMR – infections caused by bacteria resistant to antibiotics – including exploring a range of market incentive options which will encourage pharmaceutical companies and others to fund research and trials for new antibiotics.

Pledges on climate and health were also made with G7 members committing to build climate-neutral health systems by 2050 at the latest, and to support countries across the globe in this effort.

Speaking from Berlin, UK Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

This meeting was a crucial moment for G7 member countries as we learn the lessons of Covid and how to live with the virus.

I am committed to ensuring we are all better prepared against future health threats including another pandemic and antimicrobial resistance, which is why it was so important we united today to protect the world's health.

The UK's leading the way with our living with Covid approach, and it was great to exchange ideas with my G7 counterparts on how we all move out of the pandemic.

The Pandemic Pact aims to help embed a One Health approach, which considers the connection between people, animals, plants, and the environment, to help identify emerging health threats across these groups, and improve detection of new variants of concern. This will help strengthen global health security and better protect everyone from another pandemic

AMR is estimated to cause 1.27million deaths a year worldwide – around 1 in 5 deaths are amongst children under 5 – making it a leading cause of death globally.

The G7 health ministers meeting took place in Berlin from Thurs 19 May – Friday 20 May and concluded with the signing of the G7 Health Ministers' Declaration.

The Declaration has sections on: the G7 Pact for Pandemic Readiness; overcoming the pandemic in 2022; tackling the silent pandemic of AMR; and climate neutral health systems.