

# The National Management of medicine supply issues affecting commercial aseptic compounding companies

## Background

In February 2022, NHS England formed a short life working group to look at the national management of medicine supply issues impacting commercial aseptic compounding companies. The remit of the group was; to review national processes to determine how these linked into existing regional and local processes; to work with the Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to align and standardise these processes; add resilience to the management of supply issues which have an impact for the commercial aseptic compounding companies supplying the NHS.

## Purpose

One of the outputs of the short life working group is to share a summary of the national process and where commercial compounders can look for information on known supply issues.

This document can be used by commercial aseptic compounders as a source of information to supplement local medicine supply issue management processes impacting services to the NHS and to support staff training. The overall aim is to provide clear, robust, and standardised local processes to support early identification of medicine supply issues and provide appropriate escalation to the contracting authorities, regional procurement specialists, and national medicines supply teams for further investigation where required.

## Information and Tools

NHSE and DHSC Medicines Supply Teams and SPS held an information session in spring 2022 where the national process for the management of medicine supply issues was outlined, including the communications that the teams produce. A detailed breakdown of the local, regional and national processes for the management of supply issues covered in the session, including the resulting communications can be found in [A Guide to Managing Medicines Supply and Shortages](#).

This opportunity was also used to introduce commercial compounders to the Medicines Supply Tool hosted on the Specialist Pharmacy Service website ([www.sps.nhs.uk](http://www.sps.nhs.uk)) and registration to gain access to the tool encouraged. The tool provides access to the mitigation plans for nationally managed medicine supply issues.

Commercial compounders are encouraged to use these two information sources to review their internal processes and ensure that:

- these are clear and robust
- early scanning for potential supply disruptions is encouraged
- internal and external escalation pathways are outlined, where it is deemed that an existing or potential supply disruption could impact the company's ability to continue to supply products to the NHS.

As shared in the information session, early reporting of actual and potential supply issues is key to ensuring that there is no or minimal patient impact. In other words, the NHS and Department of Health and Social Care would rather be informed about a potential issue early and find that it resolves, rather than late notification of an issue that is already impacting a compounder's ability to maintain supply. Please ensure that your organisation informs the appropriate contracting authorities as soon as you are aware of a potential issue. If the supply of impacted products is not supplied against a framework/contract and therefore there isn't a contracting authority, please inform one of the national medicines supply teams (see below).

## Action required by commercial aseptic compounders

- Review internal processes for managing supply disruptions, including but not limited to:
  - Regularly scanning for potential problems (e.g. accessing and using the Medicines Supply Tool)
  - Risk assessment and local mitigation planning
  - Internal escalation pathway for potential/actual supply issues and likely impact on supply
  - Early and appropriate notification/escalation to contracting authorities, regional NHS procurement specialists and teams and/or the national medicines supply teams
  - External contacts for escalation:
    - Contract managers for the authority that you hold a contract with
    - NHS Regional Pharmacy Procurement Specialist for the region impacted
    - The national teams
- [DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:DHSCmedicinesupplyteam@dhsc.gov.uk) or [england.cmupharmacyteam@nhs.net](mailto:england.cmupharmacyteam@nhs.net)
- If appropriate, amend your existing processes to make best use of materials shared
- Cascade this information and any updated processes to relevant colleagues

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