



**Llywodraeth Cymru**  
**Welsh Government**

## **MEDICINES SHORTAGE ADVISORY GROUP WALES**

### **MEDICINE SHORTAGE**

<b>Distribution:</b>	As Annex 1
<b>From:</b>	Andrew Evans, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
<b>Date:</b>	11 July 2019
<b>Reference:</b>	CPhO/MedsLet/2019/08
<b>Category:</b>	Level 3 - High impact
<b>Title:</b>	Disruption to supply of Salbutamol Syrup 2mg/5ml.
<b>For Action by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All General Practitioners – Action as below.</li><li>• Dispensing General Practitioners – please ensure this message is seen by all working in your dispensary and retain a copy in your 'locum information pack'. Action as below.</li><li>• Community Pharmacists - Action as below.</li><li>• Hospital Chief Pharmacists - Action as below.</li><li>• Medical Directors of Health Boards - disseminate to relevant clinicians in secondary care setting.</li></ul>	
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Action within 24 hrs
<b>For Information:</b>	See Annex 1 – Distribution List
<b>Key Recipients:</b>	

Chief Executives of Health Boards  
Chief Executives of NHS Trusts  
Nurse Directors Health Boards  
Directors of Public Health  
Health Board and NHS Trust Chief Pharmacists  
Health Board Prescribing Advisers  
Director, Welsh Medicines Information Centre  
  
NHS111  
NHS Direct Wales

**What is this about:**

There is a short-term supply issue affecting Salbutamol Syrup 2mg/5ml

Indication

Salbutamol is a selective  $\beta_2$ -agonist bronchodilator which provides short acting bronchodilation in reversible airways obstruction. It is licensed for the management of asthma, bronchospasm and/or reversible airways obstruction in adults, adolescents and children aged 2 to 12 years. The syrup is intended for use in patients who are unable to use an inhaler device.<sup>1,2</sup>

**Issue & Action to be taken:**

Issue

GlaxoSmithKline plc (GSK) and Pinewood Laboratories Ltd are UK licensed suppliers.

Both GSK and Pinewood are currently out of stock. Pinewood do not have a resupply date but GSK have advised that stock should be back early August.

Action

Inhaled therapy is the preferred method of administration and should be used whenever possible<sup>3</sup> as it is more effective and has fewer side-effects than oral preparations of beta2 agonists.<sup>3,4</sup>

Patients should be reviewed to ensure that oral is the most appropriate route of administration.

For patients in whom the syrup is considered necessary and who cannot manage the inhaled route, standard salbutamol tablets can be crushed and mixed with water for administration. Without crushing they disperse in two to five minutes.<sup>5</sup>

Salbutamol 2mg and 4mg tablets are available from Accord UK.

In addition, specialist importers are able to source unlicensed supplies.

When prescribing and dispensing unlicensed preparations, prescribers and pharmacists should always ensure the following:

Use of unlicensed products should be in line with agreed local policies and guidance.

Any decision to prescribe an unlicensed medicine must take into account the relevant GMC guidance and local governance procedures. Please see link to GMC guidance:

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/prescribing-and-managing-medicines-and-devices/prescribing-unlicensed-medicines>

#### References

1. GlaxoSmithKline UK. Ventolin Syrup. SPC , date of revision of the text, 05/02/2015:  
<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/854/smpc>
2. Pinewood Healthcare. Salbutamol Syrup 2mg/5ml. SPC; date of revision of text 18/08/2016:  
<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/4557>
3. Evelina London Paediatric Formulary. Salbutamol formulary; last updated July 15, 2018
4. BNF accessed online, 24 June 2019: Long-acting beta2 agonists: <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/treatment-summary/bronchodilators.html>
5. NEWT guidelines for administration of medicines to patients with enteral feeding tubes/ swallowing difficulties. Salbutamol monograph, updated May 2010

The above advice is based on UKMI advice published on 4 July 2019:  
<https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/shortage-of-salbutamol-syrup-2mg-5ml/>

Please forward to listed recipients.

Yours sincerely



**Andrew Evans**  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer/Prif Swyddog Fferyllo  
Welsh Government/Llywodraeth Cymru

**DISTRIBUTION LIST**

**Send to:**

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Principal Pharmacist Welsh Quality Control  
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CIW  
NHS Direct  
NHS Wales Procurement

**NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership to forward to:**

General Practitioners  
Dispensing General Practitioners  
Community Pharmacists  
  
Independent / Private clinics, hospices and hospitals throughout  
Wales

**Welsh Government:**

Chief Medical Officer  
Chief Nursing Officer  
Chief Therapies Officer  
Director General Health and Social Services Group  
Director Primary Care & Health Science  
Deputy Director Primary Care

Emergency Planning Adviser

HSSG Comms