Out of season influenza outbreak prescribing protocol (FluOOS)

Prescribing of antiviral medicines for influenza out of season

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| **This protocol is for use in the incidence of a localised outbreak diagnosed and notified to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Health protection team (HPT) formerly Public Health England (PHE), outside the usual flu season.**  Note this protocol is **not** for use when the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) has announced through a central altering system (CAS) alert that circulating levels of influenza in the community have reached the levels to make prescribing appropriate (‘in flu season’). This usually occurs in winter but not exclusively, when prescribing is determined by NICE [TA158](https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA158) and [TA168](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta168) . |

If influenza is diagnosed outside of the normal flu season and a localised outbreak of illness is taking place in patients falling in an ‘at risk’ group, a prescriber, in association with UKHSA HPT, may wish to prescribe antiviral medication as set out in NICE guidance, i.e.:

NICE Technology Appraisal Guidance [TA158](https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA158) (prophylaxis) states:

*During localised outbreaks of influenza-like illness (outside the periods when national surveillance indicates that influenza virus is circulating generally in the community), oseltamivir*, amantadine and *zanamivir may be used for post-exposure prophylaxis in at-risk people living in long-term residential or nursing homes, whether or not they are vaccinated. However, this should be done only if there is a high level of certainty that the causative agent in a localised outbreak is influenza, usually based on virological evidence of infection with influenza in the index case or cases.*

NICE Technology Appraisal Guidance [TA168](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta168) (treatment) states:

*During localised outbreaks of influenza-like illness (outside the periods when national surveillance indicates that influenza virus is circulating in the community), oseltamivir, amantadine and zanamivir may be offered for the treatment of influenza in 'at-risk' people who live in long-term residential or nursing homes. However, these treatments should be offered only if there is a high level of certainty that the causative agent in a localised outbreak is influenza (usually based on virological evidence of influenza infection in the initial case).*

## **Prescribing:**

Out of the notified season it is not possible to prescribe on an FP10 NHS prescription, in line with Drug Tariff criteria. FP10s may only be used when a Chief Medical Officer (CMO) notification has been issued to say that influenza is circulating in the community. Therefore, prescribing is undertaken on a Patient Specific Direction (PSD)\* specifically designed for the purpose.

A SystmOne ‘pop-up’ is in place to make this easier for prescribers to automatically populate the PSD.

**In season**, normal FP10 prescribing, in line with TA158 and TA168 should occur. Prescriptions should be sent/taken to the patient’s or care home’s usual pharmacy.

**Out of season** the prescriber will be taken to a template for an NHS PSD for supply. This should be completed in full to include all the relevant details (see PSD template - Appendix 1). A copy of the PSD should be retained by the patient /institution.

Prescribers need to be clear whether they are prescribing **treatment** for a patient who has symptoms or **chemoprophylaxis** for patients who are non-symptomatic but have been exposed to the virus. In most cases where this protocol is deployed to control an outbreak, the majority of prescribing will be for post exposure chemoprophylaxis. Prescribers will need to **discuss this with the UKHSA health protection team** leading the response. The dose for each indication is different. Use a current BNF or BNF online to check the dose and adjust for weight and renal function as directed by UKHSA.

Patients and staff should be given instructions to ensure they start treatment/prophylaxis within the specified time frame after onset of symptoms or exposure to influenza:

* For treatment or prophylaxis with oseltamivir, adults and children - within 48 hours
* For treatment with zanamivir and patient >5 but <13 years of age - within 36 hours
* For treatment with zanamivir and patient >13 years of age - within 48 hours
* For prophylaxis with zanamivir, adults and children >5 years of age - within 36 hours

Children over 1 year of age and adults with swallowing difficulties, and those receiving nasogastric oseltamivir, should use capsules which are opened and mixed into an appropriate sugary liquid as oseltamivir has a very bitter taste.

Where patients currently receiving chemoprophylaxis go on to start displaying symptoms of the virus, the patient will need to be clinically reassessed, prescribed antiviral treatment and the HPT notified.

The PSD should be printed and given to the patient/carer to take to the pharmacy. During the working week the pharmacy will be the patient’s/institution’s choice. In the out-of-hours period, the pharmacy should be chosen based on availability of the antiviral medication and whether they are open. It is advisable to contact the Pharmacy in advance to ensure supplies are available within the required 36-48 hour timeframe.

Pharmacies will have regular wholesaler deliveries, usually 6 days per week. Orders sent in by 6pm are likely to be delivered the next day.

If the prescription is issued on a Saturday, or during a bank holiday weekend, there may be a risk that the treatment or prophylaxis will not be started within 36-48 hours. On those rare occasions, it is advisable to direct patients to a late opening/Sunday opening pharmacy or one which is planned to be open on the bank holiday. If necessary, the pharmacy can then make a special order for the medication and have it courier delivered to allow prompt start of treatment.

**AAH:** Southampton 07767 690844, Bristol 07957 998166

**Alliance:** Call the Key Holder (01392 426947). Quote account name, a contact name and a contact telephone number. Provide details of the product required. The Service Centre Duty Manager will contact you to confirm product availability and estimated time and place of delivery plus charge.

**Phoenix Medical:** 01928 750500. Quote account name, a contact name and a contact telephone number. Provide details of the product required. They will confirm product availability and estimated time and place of delivery plus charge.

**Other information:**

PSD\* – Patient Specific Direction – this is the way most medicines are directed to be supplied or administered. Prescription charts in hospitals are PSDs, as is a private prescription (where the individual is required to pay). Prescribers should not be concerned about having to use a PSD as an alternative way of generating a prescription.

Please do not use a private prescription for this purpose as this may create confusion. There are occasionally people who choose to be privately treated during times of an outbreak, even if they are entitled to treatment on the NHS.

**Pharmacies – dispensing and claiming payment**

All pharmacies registered with the GPhC and holding a NHS England contract should be able to issue antivirals through this protocol, as long as they are able to do so in time for the patients to get the dose within the required time. By not restricting supply to specific pharmacies, this should allow treatment/prophylaxis to be obtained locally.

When the pharmacy is presented with the NHS Dorset PSD for influenza medicines, the pharmacy should supply the course of treatment requested and then retain the PSD for their records. There should also be a record made in the patient’s medication record (PMR) in the pharmacy, the same as any other dispensing.

The patient(s) will need to be treated with the prescribed flu treatment within the time frames set out above. On normal working days, if the medication is in stock, or when there are regular wholesaler deliveries available, it is expected that the antiviral will be supplied with “reasonable promptness” and supplied same day or next day the same as any other medication.

**Payment & Claims**

After following this protocol, the pharmacy must notify the NHS Dorset medicines optimisation team via [medicine.question@nhsdorset.nhs.uk](mailto:medicine.question@nhsdorset.nhs.uk) as soon as possible attaching a completed Community Pharmacy FluOOS Claim Form (Appendix 2). Please note that **NO PATIENT IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE EMAIL.**

Once the medicines optimisation team have approved the claim form, they will email the community pharmacy to confirm approval for the pharmacy to invoice NHS Dorset. Payment is claimed by completing the invoice proforma (Appendix 3) and posting it to:

NHS Dorset ICB

QVV Payables M985

Phoenix House

Topcliffe Lane

Wakefield

WF3 1WE

No patient level details must be recorded on the invoice.

Once the invoice has been processed and cross checked with the FluOOS Community Pharmacy Claim Form, the community pharmacy will be paid for supply of the antiviral drug.

For situations where the pharmacy dispenses from stock or orders a supply of drug through normal wholesaler routes, the pharmacy can claim the list price of the drug supplied plus a dispensing / management fee of £35 per outbreak. For exceptional situations when the wholesaler emergency supply is necessary, the wholesaler urgent delivery fee can also be claimed.

**Exceptional circumstances:**

If the diagnosis and presentation of the PSD via the normal wholesaler delivery will not allow initiation of the first dose within the required 36-48 hours, the pharmacy should use the mainline wholesaler urgent supply facility to order the required medicines. It is anticipated that this will only be needed when prescribed on a bank holiday. The mainline wholesalers, Phoenix, Alliance and AAH will provide urgent courier facilities. These exceptional fees will be reimbursed by NHS Dorset.

**Additional documents:**

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| Appendix | Name | Links (public website) |
| Appendix 1 | FluOOS PSD Template(s) | [Dorset Formulary (dorsetformulary.nhs.uk)](https://www.dorsetformulary.nhs.uk/searchresults.asp?SearchVar=fluoos&Submit2=Search) |
| Appendix 2 | FluOOS Community Pharmacy claim form | [Dorset Formulary (dorsetformulary.nhs.uk)](https://www.dorsetformulary.nhs.uk/searchresults.asp?SearchVar=fluoos&Submit2=Search) |
| Appendix 3 | FluOOS Invoice proforma | [Dorset Formulary (dorsetformulary.nhs.uk)](https://www.dorsetformulary.nhs.uk/searchresults.asp?SearchVar=fluoos&Submit2=Search) |

Appendix 1: Patient Specific Direction (PSD) for supply of amantadine, oseltamivir or zanamivir during out-of-season influenza outbreaks

## **Patient details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of patient |  |
| Patient NHS number |  |
| Date of birth |  |
| Address of patient |  |

**Treatment details**

I authorise for the above-named patient to receive the following medicine for treatment or prophylaxis of influenza:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name and form of medicine |  |
| Strength of medicine |  |
| Dose |  |
| Frequency |  |
| Duration of treatment |  |

## **Prescriber details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Prescriber signature |  |
| Prescriber name (PRINT) |  |
| Date of signing |  |
| Qualification (GP/Non-Medical prescriber) |  |
| Practice/Organisation |  |

**Dispensing**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of dispensing |  |
| Pharmacist signature |  |
| Pharmacist name (PRINT) |  |
| Pharmacy address/stamp |  |

Appendix 2: Community Pharmacy FluOOS claim form for supply of amantadine, oseltamivir or zanamivir during out-of-season influenza outbreaks

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date of dispensing** | **GP practice of patient** | **Item and quantity supplied** | **Cost of drug supplied** | **Courier cost (for urgent deliveries)** | **Dispensing fee** | **Total cost** |
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| **Pharmacist name (PRINT)** |  | **Pharmacist signature** |  |
| **Pharmacy address/stamp** |  | | |

Appendix 3: Community Pharmacy FluOOS invoice proforma

