



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

*From Will Quince MP  
Minister of State for Health and Secondary Care*

*39 Victoria Street  
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Your Ref: NF18231

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Nick Fletcher MP

By email to: [nick.fletcher.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nick.fletcher.mp@parliament.uk)

15 September 2023

Dear Nick,

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 July on behalf of your constituent, Dr Dean Eggitt, regarding medicine shortages and NHS England Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) and Investment and Impact Fund (IIF) thresholds. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in replying.

I am grateful to you for raising Dr Eggitt's concerns.

Medicine supply problems may be caused by several factors, including manufacturing difficulties, regulatory problems, problems with the supply of raw materials and issues related to distribution of the product. As the manufacture of medicines is complex and highly regulated, and materials and processes must meet rigorous safety and quality standards, difficulties can arise for various reasons.

We know how distressing the possibility of shortages can be, but I want to assure Dr Eggitt that the Department has well-established processes to deal with medicine shortages, whatever the cause, and works closely with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, the pharmaceutical industry, NHS England and others operating in the supply chain to help prevent shortages and to ensure that the risks to patients are minimised when shortages do arise.

The department is aware that there is a global supply shortage of glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists that will be ongoing and intermittent until mid-2024. We have issued guidance in the form of a National Patient Safety Alert addressing all GLP-1 receptor agonists and advising healthcare professionals on how to manage patients. The guidance is clear that these medicines should only be prescribed for the treatment of Type 2 diabetes, to protect supply for diabetes patients.

We have also kept the NHS updated of the ongoing issue via the online Medicines Supply Tool that healthcare professionals can access through the Specialist Pharmacy Services website.

We are also aware of some suppliers having an issue with Gliclazide MR 30mg tablets but that other suppliers are able to fully cover UK demand.

There is also a supply issue with Tresiba® (Insulin degludec) FlexTouch 100units/ml solution for injection 3ml pre-filled pens; however, Tresiba cartridges are sufficiently available to cover any gaps in supply. Communications on this were issued on 24 May.

We understand that the lack of availability of a whole class of medicines for managing type 2 diabetes has the potential to create a challenge to maintaining and/or achieving glycaemic control for people who are already on these drugs or people who would be indicated. NHS England is monitoring the situation but, as it expects a relatively small proportion of people with type 2 diabetes to be affected, it does not have plans to payment protect the QOF or IIF indicators at present. It is worth noting that there are no indicators in the 2023/24 IIF scheme that give incentives to prescribe medicines to treat diabetes. We advise that local clinical pathways are followed where advice or support with managing any people affected might be required.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Will Quince', is centered below the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

**WILL QUINCE MP  
MINISTER OF STATE**