

# DRUG ALERT

## CLASS 4 MEDICINES SUPPLY INFORMATION

### Caution in Use

### Distribute to Pharmacy and Wholesaler Level

Dear Healthcare Professional

## Risk associated with duplicate GTIN (product identification) barcodes on medicines

### Background

Users have identified a small number of GTIN codes that have been used by manufacturers on more than one product. The majority of these duplicate codes do not pose a direct risk to patients.

A small number of duplicate codes relate to different drug, dose or form and may pose a risk to patient safety. The **attached list** includes the products currently known to be affected. Further work is ongoing to identify which of these products may still be in date and remain in the supply chain. We will provide an update when this information is available.

Manufacturers are being reminded centrally that GTIN codes must never be reused and central action is being taken to remove the duplicate codes from the national dataset.

### Actions required

Any organisation that uses GTIN codes as part of their patient safety activities e.g. stock receipt, automated dispensing, dispensary checking processes, medication issue processes, closed loop administration of medicines etc, are advised to confirm whether their system catalogue includes any of the affected GTIN codes. If affected codes are in use locally then urgent steps should be taken to ensure that any discrepancies will not lead to patient harm through inadvertent product selection.

Examples of suggested actions are:

- Confirming whether affected codes are correctly allocated in local product catalogues and any potential patient safety risk.
- Considering removing affected codes from product catalogues to ensure if an affected pack is scanned the scan will fail and need manual checking.

RQIA should bring this information to the attention of private hospitals/clinics registered with them and any other relevant care facilities



The Business Services Organisation is asked to bring this information to the attention of Community Pharmacists and General Medical Practitioners directly.

Recipients of this Drug Alert should bring it to the attention of relevant contacts by copy of this letter.

**TO ALL CHEMISTS, DOCTORS ON THE LISTS**

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