

Canice Ward
Head of Medicines Regulatory Group



Department of
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Registered Pharmacies

Our Ref: HE1/20/574744

Date: 16 December 2020

Dear Colleague,

Prescriptions Issued by EEA Health Professionals Following the Transition Period

The purpose of this letter is to provide clarity on whether prescriptions issued by EEA Health Professionals can be dispensed in Northern Ireland following the end of the transition period on 31st December 2020.

Some changes to the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 were made by The Human Medicines (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.¹ Following the end of the transition period, a prescription issued by ‘an approved country health professional’ can be dispensed in Northern Ireland. The current listed professions and listed countries can be found at the following link and have been reproduced in **Appendix A** of this letter for convenience, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prescriptions-issued-in-the-eea-and-switzerland-guidance-for-pharmacists#eel-decline>.

The lists of approved countries and approved health professions will be reviewed at least every 3 years. Any changes will be communicated in good time so that pharmacists are able to amend their practices appropriately.

The rules relating to controlled drugs have not changed. Pharmacists cannot dispense a controlled drug, listed in Schedule 1, 2 or 3 to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002, against a prescription issued by an approved country health professional.

Similarly, pharmacists cannot dispense medicines that do not have a valid Marketing Authorisation against a prescription from an approved country health professional.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2019/775/contents/made>

Pharmacists asked to dispense prescriptions issued by prescribers outside the UK must ensure the prescription;

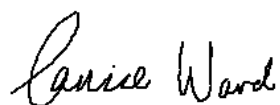
- was issued by an approved professional in an approved country by reference to the approved professions and approved countries lists
- meets legal requirements as set out in the Human Medicine Regulations 2012. Ensure that the name, professional qualifications and contact details of the prescriber (including work address, email address and telephone or fax number with the appropriate international prefix) are clearly stated on the prescription along with the name of the country in which the prescription was issued

Pharmacists may dispense the prescription if it has been issued in an approved country on the list and is signed by a qualified prescriber practising in an approved profession on the list. If the prescription is from a country or prescriber that is not on the list, it should not be dispensed and the patient signposted to appropriate services if needed.

These changes do not affect a pharmacist's right to exercise their professional discretion to refuse to dispense a prescription if any of the following apply:

- it would not ordinarily be dispensed in the UK
- there are doubts over its authenticity
- there are concerns about the clinical appropriateness of the medicine(s) for that patient
- it would cause any issues of health and safety

Yours sincerely



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Appendix A – correct as of December 2020

Approved countries

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Republic of Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- The Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland

Approved professions

- doctors
- dentists
- pharmacists
- nurses
- physiotherapists
- chiropodists or podiatrists
- community nurses
- optometrists
- therapeutic radiographers
- paramedics