

# **Glossary of Terms**

**Practice level prescribing data**

**Publication date – 9 May 2017**

---

## Contents

Data and Reference Files .....	2
Prescribing Data Source .....	3
Prescribing Data File – Field Descriptions .....	3
Calculating Cost per Item .....	3
Continuity of Data.....	3
Revisions Statement .....	4
Accuracy .....	4
Completeness .....	4
Contact.....	5
Further Information.....	5
A1 – Prescribing Data File Field Descriptions .....	6

## Data and Reference Files

For each month there is one file:

### Prescribing Data file

This is the data file containing prescribing data at presentation level using the British National Formulary (BNF) item code and BNF item description.

Drug product, GP Practice and Health Board reference files:

### Drug Product Reference file

A reference file providing details of BNF chapter, chapter code, section, section code, paragraph, paragraph code, subparagraph, subparagraph code, chemical substance, chemical substance code, product, product code, presentation and presentation code (equivalent to BNF item code within prescribing data file) is available online from NHS Business Services Authority Information Services Portal. To access this you are required to login as a guest at

<https://apps.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/infosystems/welcome>

The reference file is then accessed by clicking on the 'Data' button to the top left of the screen, selecting 'Drug Data', and then selecting 'BNF Code Information'. You should then click on 'Get Data' and you will be asked whether you want to open or save the file.

Within the prescribing data file there are BNF item codes that do not align to the standard 15 digit BNF item codes. Where no 15 digit BNF item code has been provided, an 11 digit (or shorter) BNF item code has been manually entered to allow users of the data to identify the BNF chapter, BNF section, BNF paragraph, and BNF sub-paragraph a product aligns to.

### GP Practice Reference file

A list of general practices in Scotland is available to download from the ISD Scotland website at

[ISD Scotland | Health Topics | General Practice](#)

The download contains: NHS board name, numeric practice code, practice list size, practice name, practice address, practice postcode, practice telephone number, and whether or not the practice is a dispensing practice.

### Health Board Reference file

A geography reference file containing several worksheets detailing lookup information and codes for Scottish geographies is available to download from the ISD Scotland website at

[ISD Scotland | Geography](#)

The download contains 2006 Health Board codes and 2014 Health Board codes. The prescribing data is mapped to 2014 Health Board codes.

## Prescribing Data Source

The data is extracted from the Prescribing Information System (PIS) database, which is maintained by NHS National Services Scotland (NSS). The data is gathered by Practitioner Services Division (PSD) who are responsible for the processing of payments to Scottish dispensing contractors on behalf of NHS Boards. Data Capture Validation and Pricing (DCVP) is the system used by PSD for this purpose, and a monthly feed takes place between DCVP and PIS.

The data covers prescriptions that are prescribed in Scotland by GPs (General Medical Practitioners) and other prescribers (nurses, pharmacists, dentists and allied health professionals (AHPs)) and subsequently dispensed by a community pharmacist, appliance supplier or dispensing doctor anywhere within the UK. Also included are prescriptions written in hospitals that were dispensed in the community. The data includes all medicines, dressings and appliances that were dispensed and reimbursed. Prescriptions dispensed within hospitals, private prescriptions and 'over the counter' products that have been purchased are not included. Stock order forms (form type GP10A) are also included.

## Prescribing Data File – Field Descriptions

The comma separated values (CSV) file of prescribing data contains the following data items:

- Paid Date
- Health Board Code
- Practice Code
- BNF Item Code
- BNF Item Description
- Class of Preparation Code
- Number of Paid Items
- Paid Gross Ingredient Cost (£)

Full definitions of these items are included within [Appendix A1](#).

## Calculating Cost per Item

To calculate cost per item, divide the gross ingredient cost by number of paid items.

## Continuity of Data

The definition of the main measures such as gross ingredient cost and number of items are unchanged over the period data has been available within PIS. Drug products are first licensed as proprietary medicines but generic versions often appear once the original patent expires. This can affect the price and uptake of these drugs. The Scottish Government sets the reimbursement price of generic drug products via the [Scottish Drug Tariff](#) which is updated and issued quarterly.

## Revisions Statement

Data is sourced from monthly pharmacy payments data on an ongoing basis therefore once published there is no routine requirement to revise historical data.

## Accuracy

The data is sourced from a payment system and routine monthly checks are carried out by Practitioner Services on a random sample of approximately 5% of prescription payments. These check all data captured for payment and the accuracy of the payment calculation and have a target accuracy of 98% which is routinely met. Data that is captured but is not mandatory for payment purposes can be of lower quality; principally this includes the prescriber code which links a prescription back to the individual prescriber (e.g. GP) and their organisation (e.g. practice or NHS Board). Routine monitoring of unallocated prescriptions is carried out and correct codes are applied before publication. This ensures that all unallocated prescriptions account for fewer than 2% of all prescriptions. For remaining unallocated prescriptions, the prescribing NHS Board is assumed to be the same as the dispensing NHS Board.

## Completeness

The Prescribing Information System holds information on 100% of NHS Scotland prescriptions dispensed within the community and claimed for payment by a pharmacy contractor (i.e. pharmacy, dispensing doctor or appliance supplier). It does not include data on prescriptions dispensed but not claimed (likely to be very small) or prescriptions prescribed but not submitted for dispensing by a patient. Some research has estimated these latter prescriptions to account for around 6% of all prescriptions issued to patients. It is not possible to determine from payment data how much of the medicine dispensed to patients is actually taken in accordance with dosage instructions.

## Contact

### Prescribing Team

Information Services Division  
National Information and Intelligence Service  
[nss.isdprescribing@nhs.net](mailto:nss.isdprescribing@nhs.net)

## Further Information

Further information can be found on the [ISD website](#)

## A1 – Prescribing Data File Field Descriptions

Field Description	Field Information
PaidDate	Year and month payment is claimed in format YYYYMM. Prescriptions may or may not be dispensed, claimed for payment or paid in the same month that the prescription was written.
HealthBoardCode	Each NHS Health Board has a unique nine digit numeric code which can be used to link the prescribing data file to the health board reference file.
PracticeCode	<p>Each GP practice has a unique five digit numeric practice code which can be used to link the prescribing data file to the GP practice reference file.</p> <p>Within the dataset, unallocated practice codes have been assigned the abbreviation “NK” (not known).</p> <p>Prescriptions that originated from a dentist surgery have been assigned the abbreviation “Dent”.</p> <p>Prescriptions that originated from a community pharmacy have been assigned the abbreviation “Pharm”.</p> <p>Prescriptions that originated from a hospital have been assigned the abbreviation “Hosp”.</p>
BNFItemCode	<p>The BNF Item Code is a 15 digit code in which the first seven digits are allocated according to the categories in the BNF and the last 8 digits represent the medicinal product, form, strength and the link to the generic equivalent product.</p> <p>The BNF Item Code takes the following form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characters 1 &amp; 2 show BNF chapter</li> <li>• 3 &amp; 4 show the BNF section</li> <li>• 5 &amp; 6 show the BNF paragraph</li> <li>• 7 shows the BNF sub-paragraph</li> <li>• 8 &amp; 9 show the chemical substance</li> <li>• 10 &amp; 11 show the product</li> <li>• 12 &amp; 13 show the strength and formulation</li> <li>• 14 &amp; 15 show the link to the generic equivalent product <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Where the product is a <b>generic</b>, the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> characters will be the same as the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> character.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Where the product is a <b>brand</b>, the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> characters will be the same as the generic equivalent (if this exists).</li> <li>○ Where the product is a <b>brand and a generic equivalent does not exist</b>, the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> characters will be "A0".</li> </ul> <p>There are items within the prescribing dataset (mainly from the additional chapters that are included as appendices within the BNF or not listed in the BNF) that have a shorter BNF item code which has been manually input to allow users of the data to identify the BNF chapter, BNF section, BNF paragraph, and BNF sub-paragraph an item aligns to. These items follow the numbering convention above for the initial six digits.</p> <p>Items with no BNF item code attributed have not been included within the dataset. For a sample month this equated to 0.4% of all paid items.</p>
BNFItemDescription	The drug represented by the BNF item code, detailing the product name, formulation and strength.
ClassofPreparationCode	<p>This code indicates whether a drug was prescribed as generic or proprietary – G or P respectively. All other items, such as appliances and dressings or where the class of preparation is unknown, are classed as X.</p> <p>This field is omitted from the dataset prior to the February 2017 open data file.</p>
NumberOfPaidItems	The number of paid items relates to the number of prescription items dispensed and for which the dispenser has been reimbursed. An item is an individual product dispensed, e.g. 100 aspirin tablets of 300mg. There should be a maximum of three line items on a prescription; this should be three individual products defined by active ingredient, formulation type and strength for medicines, with appropriate parallel measures for appliances. A compounded product with a known formula will count as one item despite the number of ingredients.
GrossIngredientCost	Paid Gross Ingredient Cost is the reimbursement cost for the paid quantity based upon the NHS basic price as listed in the Scottish drug tariff or manufacturer's price list. The figures are in £s and pence. The Scottish Gross Ingredient Cost is equivalent to the UK Net Ingredient Cost.