

# **Publication of Prescribing Data Summary Report**

**Practice level prescribing data**

**Publication date – 31 March 2016**

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## Introduction

Information Services Division (ISD) aim to produce data files similar to those released by other UK countries, with the intention of making Scottish prescribing data more accessible to the public and to reduce the number of routine reports produced by ISD, allowing analysts more time to conduct bespoke analysis. The release will initially be classed as official experimental statistics (new official statistics undergoing evaluation). Following a three month review, the release may undergo evaluation for designation as national statistics. A prescribing dashboard of summary statistics will accompany the data. The first open data release in April 2016 will include four monthly files for October to December 2015 and January 2016. Further files will then be released on a monthly basis (there is a two-three month lag so February 2016 data will be released in May 2016).

This report will detail the planned content of the monthly files. An overview of GP practice prescribing presentation-level data for England, Wales and Northern Ireland is included within the appendix.

## Prescribing Data File

Prescribing data will be released as a comma separated values file (CSV file) on a monthly basis and will be similar to the prescribing data files already released by England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The data will be extracted from the [Prescribing Information System \(PIS\)](#). GP Practice prescribing will be released at practice level. Dentist, hospital and community pharmacy prescribing will be released at health board level.

### Data Fields

To replicate prescribing data files already released by other UK countries, it is proposed that the following metrics will be reported on:

- Paid calendar month and year
- Prescriber health board code (nine digit code)
- Prescriber location code (five digit code or aggregated to not known, dentist, hospital, community pharmacy)
- Prescribed item BNF code (British National Formulary code allocated according to categories in the BNF and medicinal product)
- BNF Item Description
- Number of paid items
- Paid Gross Ingredient Cost (£)

Full details and definitions of variables will be included in the Glossary of Terms document which will accompany the monthly data file on the webpage.

At present, details about which Community Health Partnership (CHP) and Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) a practice belongs to will not be included in the dataset.

## Restrictions on data released

### Prescriber organisation

Prescriptions that are not allocated to a Scottish Health Board will be excluded from the data file.

### Prescriber form type

Private prescription forms are not captured in the data file. Prescribing activity collected via dentist, hospital and community pharmacy prescribing forms will be retained but aggregated to health board level.

### Dispenser organisation

No exclusions will be applied to dispenser organisation or location type. England, Northern Ireland and Wales include all prescriptions dispensed from any health board within the UK, and all dispenser types.

### Prescription items

Items with no associated BNF item code will be excluded from the data file. For a sample month this equated to 0.4% of all paid items.

### Planned disclosure measures

No disclosure controls will be applied. A document detailing how this decision was reached will be available from the web pages hosting the data.

## Unallocated location codes

There are occasions where it is not possible to determine the exact location from which a prescription originates. Although the precise GP location may not be determined, the health board from which the script originated from can be determined and the script is assigned to an unallocated location code containing a cipher denoting the NHS board from which the form came from. All unallocated location codes that have been assigned to a Scottish NHS Board will be released at an aggregated health board level and the term 'NK' will be assigned in place of a location code where the location code is not known.

## Community Pharmacy Prescriptions Data

Data for all Scottish community pharmacy prescription form types (CP1, CP2 & CPUS) will be aggregated by NHS Board. The abbreviation 'Pharm' will be assigned rather than a location code. This data will include prescriptions issued as part of the community pharmacy led services such as the minor ailments scheme (MAS) and public health service (PHS) as well as the urgent supply of medicines.

## Hospital Prescribing Data

Data for prescriptions that originated within a Scottish hospital and were dispensed within the community will be aggregated by NHS board, and the abbreviation 'Hosp' will be assigned rather than a location code.

## Data Reference Files

### Health Board Reference File

On the ISD website there is a [geography lookup file](#) which contains several worksheets containing lookup information and codes for Scottish geographies. Users of the data will be directed towards this file to access health board references.

### Practice Reference File

GP practice details are currently published on the [ISD Primary Care webpage](#), this information is also available on the [Community Pharmacy website](#). The prescribing data file will include GP practice location codes which can then be linked to the GP details corresponding to individual codes published by the Primary Care team. This Primary Care team quarterly file includes NHS board name, practice code, practice list size, practice name, practice address, phone number, and whether or not dispensing practice. The file excludes Out of Hours services and practices which do not have any GPs or patients registered to them.

### Drug Reference File

A monthly drug reference file will not be produced by ISD. NHS Business Services Authority produces a drug reference file which can be found at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk) and accessed by logging in as a guest user.

This file includes BNF details which will allow users of the open data file to match BNF item codes included in the main data file to more comprehensive BNF details included in the drug reference 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 is provided to allow users of the data to identify the BNF chapter, BNF section, BNF paragraph, and BNF sub-paragraph a product aligns to. This data will be included within the monthly dataset and an explanation of shortened BNF item code provided within the glossary of terms.

## Quality Assurance

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.

## Publishing of Data Files

It has been recommended to publish compressed files (zip files) which can be easily downloaded by the user, these will be self-extracting zip files to make extracting the data more user friendly. This zip file will include the main prescribing data file.

## Frequently asked questions & Glossary of terms

A Glossary of Terms document and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document have been created to accompany the data. These files will both be published on the ISD webpage with the open data files. The documents detail variable definitions and any general data caveats users of the open data file should be aware of. These documents take a similar form to those produced by England ([Glossary of Terms](#), [FAQs](#)), Wales and Northern Ireland.

## 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 – GP Practice Prescribing Presentation-level data for England

The Health and Social Care Information Centre publishes monthly GP Practice Prescribing Presentation-level data files with a three month delay (e.g. the data file for October 2015 was published January 2016). Three files are released:

- Practice prescribing data file (this is the main data file giving the practice level prescribing data at presentation level using the full 15 digit BNF code)
- Chemical names and BNF code (this gives the chemical substance or section as appropriate using the 9 digit drugs BNF code or 4 digit appliances BNF code)
- Practice codes, names and addresses (this gives the practice name and address)

There is also a link to a Glossary of terms and Frequently Asked Questions PDF documents.

Sample of data file for September 2015

SHA	PCT	PRACTICE	BNF CODE	BNF NAME	ITEMS	NIC	ACT COST	QUANTITY	PERIOD
Q44	RTV	Y04937	0401010Z0AAAAAA	Zopiclone_Tab 7.5mg	1	0.84	0.89	14	201509
Q44	RTV	Y04937	0402010ABAAABAB	Quetiapine_Tab 25mg	1	0.67	0.73	28	201509
Q44	RTV	Y04937	0402010ADAAADAD	Aripiprazole_Tab 5mg	1	76.64	70.92	28	201509
Q44	RTV	Y04937	040201060AAAAAA	Olanzapine_Tab 5mg	1	0.57	0.64	14	201509
Q44	RTV	Y04937	0402020L0AAAFAF	Fluphenazine Decan_Inj 100mg/ml 1ml Amp	1	17.49	16.29	2	201509
Q44	RTV	Y04937	0402030K0BFABAI	Priadel_Tab 200mg	1	0.88	0.93	32	201509
Q44	RTV	Y04937	0403030E0AAAAAA	Fluoxetine HCl_Cap 20mg	2	1.81	1.9	49	201509
Q44	RTV	Y04937	0403030P0AAAAAA	Paroxetine HCl_Tab 20mg	1	1.26	1.28	14	201509
Q44	RTV	Y04937	0403030P0AAAKAK	Paroxetine HCl_Tab 10mg	1	25.19	23.42	42	201509
Q44	RTV	Y04937	0403030Q0AAAAAA	Sertraline HCl_Tab 50mg	4	6.13	5.92	98	201509

England's data file includes prescribing for all registered practices in England however, certain specialist types of prescriber locations such as prison prescribing, hospices and specialist clinics are coded under dummy practice codes. All prescriptions which cannot be linked to a practice are not included within the dataset. No suppression is applied to the data file. Before England released their first prescribing data file a [risk assessment](#) was carried out.

## A2 – GP Practice Prescribing Presentation-level data for Wales

NHS Wales Primary Care Services publish monthly GP Practice Prescribing Presentation-level data files with a two month delay (e.g. the data file for November 2015 was published January 2016). Three files are released:

- GP Data Extract (this is the main data file containing every item prescribed and dispensed at presentation level using the full 15 digit BNF code)
- Chemical substance file (this provides the chemical substance using the first 9 characters of the BNF code included in the main GP data file)
- Address file (this provides the name and address of each practice along with details of the Health Boards and Localities)

Explanatory notes for the GP Prescribing Data Extract can be downloaded.

Sample of data file for October 2015



HB	Locality	PracticeID	BNFCode	BNFName	Items	NIC	ActCost	Quantity	Period
7A6	6A1	W93004	0101010G0BBABAB	Maalox_Susp 195mg/220mg/5ml S/f	1	3.35	3.0971	500	201510
7A6	6A1	W93004	0101021B0BEAQAP	Gaviscon Advance_Tab Chble 500mg P/Mint	2	6.14	5.6786	120	201510
7A6	6A1	W93004	0101021B0BEARAO	Gaviscon Double Action_Tab Chble	3	25.3	23.4336	220	201510
7A6	6A1	W93004	0101021B0BEASAO	Gaviscon Double Action_Liq	2	15.52	14.3158	1200	201510
7A6	6A1	W93004	0101021B0BEAUAO	Gaviscon P/Mint_Tab Chble	3	20.85	19.536	240	201510
7A6	6A1	W93004	0101021B0BEBDAO	Gaviscon Double Action_Liq Sach 10ml	1	3.23	2.9866	12	201510
7A6	6A1	W93004	0101021B0BIABAH	Peptac_Liq (Peppermint) S/F	21	39.39	36.7316	10100	201510

### A3 – GP Practice Prescribing Presentation-level data for Northern Ireland

The Business Services Organisation publishes monthly GP practice prescribing presentation-level data files for Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland data includes all registered practices within Northern Ireland where an item has been dispensed and a claim for payment has been made in that month. Quarterly GP practice reference files are also available for download. There are two PDF documents providing frequently asked questions on GP prescribing data and explanatory notes on GP prescribing data.

#### Sample of data file for September 2015

PRACTICE	Year	Month	VTM_NM	VMP_NM	AMP_NM	Presentat	Strength	Total Item	Total Qua	Gross Cos	Actual Cos	BNF Code	BNF Chap	BNF Secti	BNF Parag	BNF Sub-P
1	2015	9	-	-	-	-	-	11	0	395.19	371.21	-	99	0	0	0
1	2015	9	-	Absorben	PremierP	WOUND M	10CMX10C	1	20	1.4	1.4	-	20	3	0	0
1	2015	9	-	Blood gluc	Aviva test	REAGENT	-	3	200	63.16	56.81	0601060D	6	1	6	0
1	2015	9	-	Blood gluc	Contour N	REAGENT	-	1	100	30.08	27.41	0601060D	6	1	6	0
1	2015	9	-	Blood gluc	FreeStyle	REAGENT	-	1	100	31.42	28.37	0601060D	6	1	6	0
1	2015	9	-	Blood gluc	OneTouch	REAGENT	-	1	200	47.96	43.29	0601060D	6	1	6	0
1	2015	9	-	Blood gluc	OneTouch	REAGENT	-	1	50	15.12	13.39	0601060D	6	1	6	0
1	2015	9	-	Blood gluc	Mobile ca	REAGENT	-	2	400	128.72	115	0601060D	6	1	6	0
1	2015	9	-	Carmellos	Orabase p	Paste	S103	2	60	4.2	4.2	-	23	80	0	0
1	2015	9	-	Clotrimaz	Canesten	PESSARY	+10G	1	1	5.21	4.62	0702020FC	7	2	2	0