About this Release

Community pharmacists, dispensing doctors and appliance suppliers are contracted by NHSScotland to provide dispensing services to the population of Scotland. These ‘dispensing contractors’ must ensure that they have medicines, dressings and appliances available to dispense to someone arriving with a prescription. To do this, they purchase these products in advance. Dispensing contractors are paid in two different ways: for the services they provide (remuneration) and for the products they dispense (reimbursement). This publication reports on the payments they receive.

Key points

- The gross total payments to Scottish dispensing contractors increased by £7.2 million (2.6%) between quarter 1 of 2013/14 and quarter 1 of 2014/15.

Services Provided

- The cost for remuneration of services has decreased by £1.0 million (1.9%) from £52.0 million in quarter 1 of 2013/14 to £51.0 million in the same period in 2014/15. This is expected to balance out over the remainder of the year.

Products Dispensed

- The number of prescription items dispensed in quarter 1 of 2014/15 was 25.2 million, an increase of 0.6 million items (2.3%) compared to the same quarter in 2013/14. The gross ingredient cost also increased by 2.3%, therefore the cost per item has remained stable.

- The net ingredient cost (NIC) paid increased from £231.3 million in quarter 1 of 2013/14 to £239.5 million in quarter 1 of 2014/15, an increase of £8.2 million (3.6%). The NIC is the cost of drugs and appliances reimbursed after deduction of any dispenser discount.
Background
Payments are derived from information gathered by Practitioner Services, within the Practitioner and Counter Fraud Service, after the pricing of prescriptions has taken place. Payments to dispensing contractors are made by Practitioner Services on behalf of NHS Boards. Monthly data are published on a quarterly basis by ISD and a year-end summary is provided.

Contact
Lucy Aitken
Senior Information Analyst
lucyaitken@nhs.net
0131 275 6801

Sarah Szwandt
Information Analyst
sarahszwandt@nhs.net
0131 275 7376

Further Information
Further information can be found in the Full Publication Report or on the ISD website.