

Prescribing & Medicines: Dispensing Reimbursement, Remuneration and Volume

Financial Year 2015/16

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About this release

This release from the Information Services Division provides the first annual publication on the number and cost of NHS prescriptions reimbursed in the community for the financial year 2015/16. This publication has been produced in response to the [2015 ISD Prescribing Data Consultation](#). Included is a breakdown of dispensing contractor payments. These payments cover monies for the services they provide (remuneration) and for the products they dispense (reimbursement).

Main points

Overall Cost

- The total (net) cost in 2015/16 was £1.3 billion; this is an increase of 6.9% compared to 2014/15. The net cost of items reimbursed has increased overall by 28.0% over the last 10 years.

Products Dispensed

- A total of 102.2 million items were reimbursed in 2015/16, an increase of 1.1% compared with 2014/15. The number of items reimbursed has been increasing year on year with a total increase of 28.1% over the last 10 years, however this rate of increase has slowed in recent years.
- The Gross Ingredient Cost of items increased by 8.6% between 2014/15 and 2015/16, to £1.1 billion. This is partly due to price adjustments, new medicines and the move in supply of some high cost treatments from hospital to primary care.
- This is reflected in the average cost per item which has increased from £10.04 to £10.79 between 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Services Provided

- The cost for remuneration of services has increased by £4.9 million (2.4%) from £208.5 million in 2014/15 to £213.4 million in 2015/16.

Background

The information contained in this annual report is obtained from NHS prescriptions dispensed in the community in Scotland. These are dispensed by community pharmacies, dispensing doctors, a small number of specialist appliance suppliers and stoma providers.

GPs write the vast majority of these prescriptions, with the remainder written by authorised prescribers such as nurses and dentists. This report does not include information on prescriptions dispensed within hospitals but does include information on prescriptions written in hospitals that were dispensed in the community. Prescriptions written on hospital forms are reimbursed from the hospital (secondary care) budget.

Total (net) cost is the reimbursement and remuneration cost minus any charges paid by patients. The charges paid by patients come from English prescription forms dispensed in Scotland.

In Scotland, the Gross Ingredient Cost is the cost of drugs and appliances reimbursed before deduction of any dispenser discount. The cost per item is calculated by dividing the Gross Ingredient Cost by the number of prescription items.

The information in this publication is taken from data gathered by [Practitioner Services, part of NHS National Services Scotland](#). Payments to dispensing contractors are made by Practitioner Services on behalf of NHS Boards.

Contact

Prescribing inbox

nss.isdprescribing@nhs.net

Paul Paxton

Information Analyst

paulpaxton@nhs.net

0131 275 6340

Sarah Fry

Senior Information Analyst

sarahfry1@nhs.net

0131 275 7376

Toby Stead

Information analyst

t.stead1@nhs.net

0131 275 799

Find out more

ISD holds several decades of information on medicines prescribed within NHSScotland. We currently have data on over one billion prescriptions. All of the information we publish on prescribing is available on our website at <http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Prescribing-and-medicines/>.

Further information can be found in the [Full Prescribing Remuneration Report](#)

All the data contained in this report are available as [downloadable data tables](#).

This report will be updated in June 2017.

ISD and Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. [Find out more about our statistics](#).