

Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland



Key Facts
2022/23

Purpose

This is a supplementary document combining key facts from the previously released 2022/23 publications relating to the four main areas within Family Practitioner Services.

They represent a range of general medical, dental, ophthalmic and pharmaceutical services, and the statistics are based on registration activity and claims submitted from within primary care to the Business Services Organisation (BSO). They do not cover secondary and private care.

Data for each of the four service areas detailed in this publication are available in full using the following link:

[Family Practitioner Services](#)

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We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics, which can be provided by email to: Info.BSO@hscni.net

Additional information about these statistics is located at the back of this publication.

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This is a National Statistics Publication

National Statistics are official statistics that have been assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation and found to be fully compliant with the Code of Practice for Statistics. They meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value.

Find out more about the Code of Practice at: [Statistics Authority Code of Practice](#)

Find out more about national statistics at: [Statistics Authority - list of national statistics](#)

Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2022/23

Key Facts

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Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2022/23

Key Facts

Introduction

This publication provides key facts in relation to general medical, dental, ophthalmic and pharmaceutical services and statistics in Northern Ireland between April 2022 and March 2023. It is a supplementary document summarising each of the standalone reports previously published in June 2023. These full reports are available to download from the [BSO FPS website](#) and provide detail on the definitions and sources of the information presented in this summary compendium. They also highlight the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on activity levels.

This publication is based on payment claims submitted by primary care dentists and opticians, community pharmacists, dispensing doctors and appliance suppliers to Family Practitioner Services (FPS). The information does not include private work and secondary care activity.

General medical information is based on patient records on the National Health Application and Infrastructure Services (NHAIS) system, the Common Practitioner Model (CPM) but does not contain data on the treatment of patients which is not available to BSO.

This publication has been produced by independent statisticians within the FPS Information Unit. They are on secondment from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). It has been compiled in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics. This publication, which was considered as part of a wider assessment of the BSO FPS statistics, was assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) and was designated as National Statistics by the UK Statistics Authority on 11th May 2022. The reports referred to within this publication were also awarded National Statistics status. Further information can be found in the Publication Notes and on the [OSR website](#).

Further information about the work of FPS and the manner in which these statistics were produced can be found at the back of this publication.

Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2022/23

Key Facts Overview

The complete 2022/23 FPS Statistics reports can be viewed on the [BSO FPS website](#).

General Medical Services



- **There were 317 active GP practices in Northern Ireland on 31 March 2023**
Approximately 9% decrease (or 33 practices) on 2014.
- **There were 1,448 registered GPs (excluding Locums)**
A 23% increase (or 268 GPs) on 2014. In 2023, 60% of GPs were female and 40% were male, a shift in gender profile from 2014 (46% / 54%).
- **More than 2 million registered patients**
This included 53,877 new patient registrations.
- **BSO processed £333.0m of payments towards the cost of GP Services**
The average payment per registered patient was £163, a decrease of 4% per patient on the previous year.

Dental Services



- **There were 363 health service dental practices in Northern Ireland on 31 March 2023**
A reduction of 2 practices compared to 2022.
- **There were 1,163 registered dentists**
An increase of 13% (or 136 dentists) since 2013.
- **The number of patients registered with a health service dentist was over 1.3m**
This was approximately 70% of the Northern Ireland population.
- **The gross cost of dental services in 2022/23 was £133.4m**
This included £13.0m in Covid-19 Support Payments and £20.4m in patient contributions.

Ophthalmic Services



- **There were 270 ophthalmic practices carrying out health service eye tests in Northern Ireland on 31 March 2023**
Almost 4% higher than in 2014 however this figure has decreased by one practice for the first time in five years.
- **There were 700 registered ophthalmic practitioners**
An increase of almost 16% over the last six years from 2017.
- **The total number of health service eye tests carried out was 446,304**
For every 4 sight tests provided, 3 were for patients aged under 16 or over 60.
- **The total cost for ophthalmic services in 2022/23 was £23.6m**
A 5% decrease on 2021/22.

Pharmaceutical Services



- **There were 525 pharmacies in Northern Ireland on 31 March 2023**
A reduction of one pharmacy on 2022 and lowest figure recorded in the last ten years.
- **There were 44.6m items dispensed in 2022/23 (all contractors)**
An increase of 3% on 2021/22.
- **There were 44.3m items dispensed in 2022/23 (pharmacies only)**
An average of 84,364 items per pharmacy, almost 4% higher than 2021/22.
- **The total ingredient cost for all items dispensed in Northern Ireland was £486.9m**
An increase of almost 7% on 2021/22.

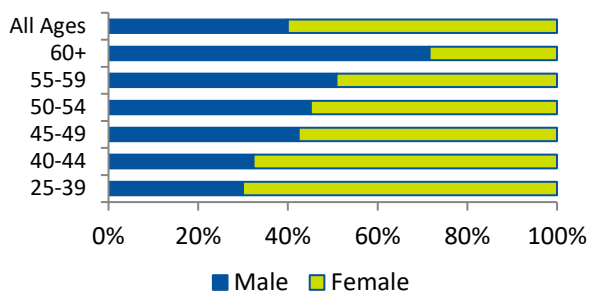
Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2022/23

General Medical Services Key Facts

The complete 2022/23 General Medical Services Statistics report can be viewed on the [BSO FPS website](#).

Workforce

GPs in Northern Ireland by Age and Gender, 31st March 2023



Local Government District	GP Practices per 100,000 Registered Patients
Mid & East Antrim	17.8
Newry, Mourne & Down	17.5
Belfast	16.9
Causeway Coast & Glens	16.5
Mid Ulster	16.4
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	15.2
Fermanagh & Omagh	15.2
Ards & North Down	14.5
Derry City & Strabane	13.0
Lisburn & Castlereagh	12.3
Antrim & Newtownabbey	11.9
Northern Ireland	15.5

Patients

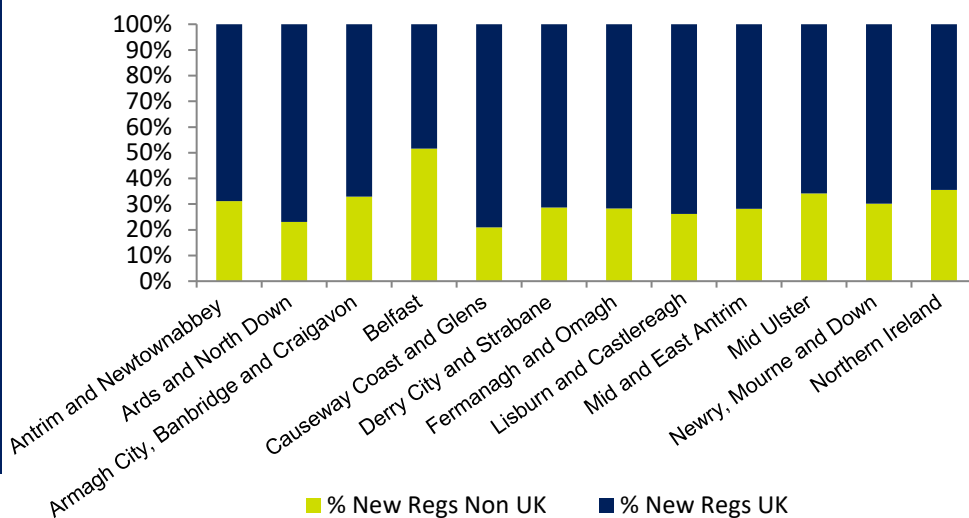
Just over 2,041,000 patients were registered with a GP practice. There were approximately 54,000 new patient registrations and approximately 39,000 patients transferred practices.

The total number of patients registered at a GP practice in NI has increased by 6% from 2014.

Average number of patients per practice was 6,439.

Almost 98% of the population lived within 5 miles of a GP practice, 88% live within 3 miles.

New (first time in NI) GP Registrations by UK Nationals and non-UK Nationals, by LGD



Payments

Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust)	BSO payment towards GP services (£m)	Average payment per patient (£)
Northern	78.4	162
Belfast	73.7	165
Southern	68.0	157
Western	59.3	176
South Eastern	53.6	157
Northern Ireland	333.0	163

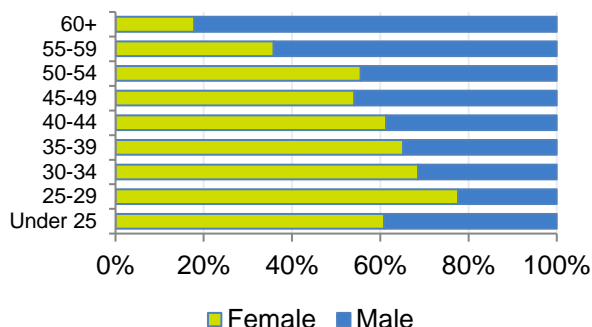
Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2022/23

Dental Services Key Facts

The complete 2022/23 Dental Services Statistics report can be viewed on the [BSO FPS website](#).

Workforce

Dentists in Northern Ireland by Age and Gender



Local Government District	Dental Practices per 100,000 Resident Patients
Belfast	24.3
Mid and East Antrim	22.8
Fermanagh & Omagh	21.9
Newry, Mourne & Down	21.5
Ards & North Down	17.7
Causeway Coast & Glens	17.2
Derry City & Strabane	17.2
Mid Ulster	16.3
Lisburn & Castlereagh	15.8
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	14.3
Antrim & Newtownabbey	13.8
Northern Ireland	18.9

Patients

In the 18-44 age group, there are 80% of females registered to a dentist compared to 65% of males.

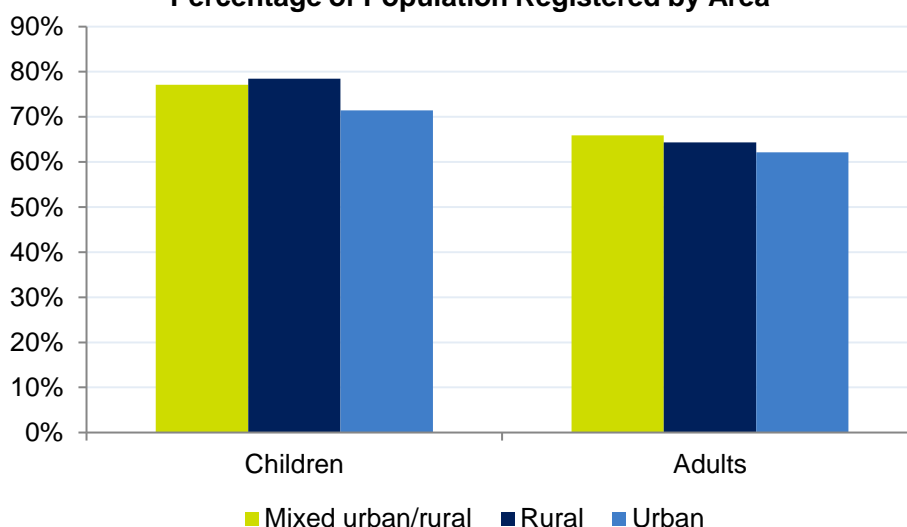
Registration rates in the 0-4 age group increased to 34% compared to 30% in 2022.

Over 94% of the population lived within 5 miles of a dental practice.

Almost 549,000 adults were seen for treatment, a 31% increase on 21/22 but 25% less than in 19/20.

Over 97,000 children received dental treatment in excess of the basic treatments covered under capitation, an increase of 28% on 21/22 but down 20% on 19/20.

Percentage of Population Registered by Area



Payments

Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust)	HSCNI payment towards dental services (£m)	Average payment per resident (£)
Belfast	26.8	73.80
Northern	26.4	54.40
Southern	21.6	53.80
South Eastern	16.9	45.60
Western	16.4	53.70
Unknown	4.9	-
Northern Ireland	113.0	58.70

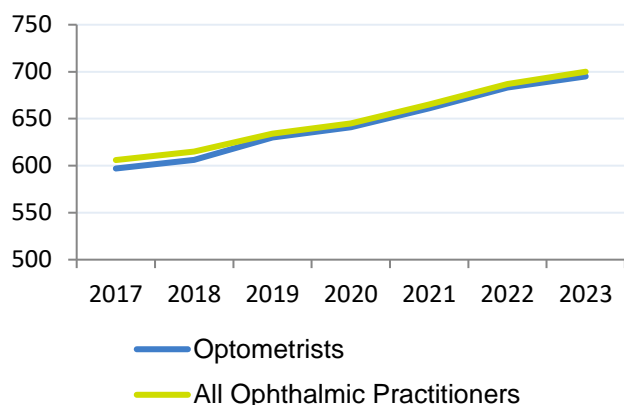
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Ophthalmic Services Key Facts

The complete 2022/23 Ophthalmic Services Statistics report can be viewed on the [BSO FPS website](#).

Workforce

Registered Ophthalmic Practitioners



Local Government District	Ophthalmic Practices per 100,000 Population
Fermanagh & Omagh	18.5
Antrim & Newtownabbey	16.5
Causeway Coast & Glens	15.1
Derry City & Strabane	14.5
Mid Ulster	14.3
Mid & East Antrim	14.2
Belfast	13.9
Newry, Mourne & Down	12.9
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	12.5
Ards & North Down	12.2
Lisburn & Castlereagh	11.9
Northern Ireland	14.0

Patients

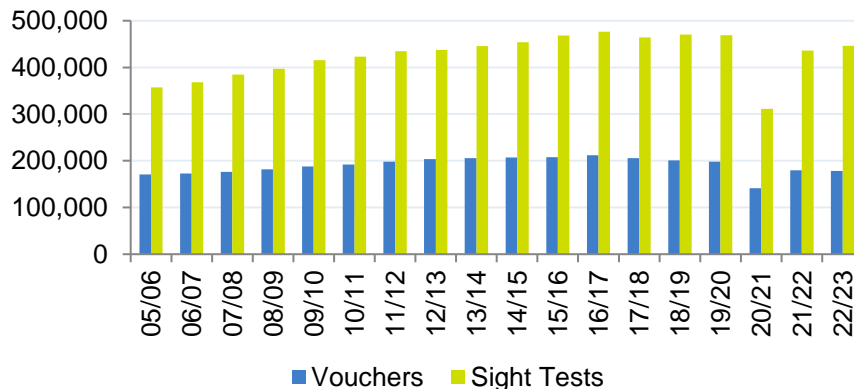
95% of the population lived within 5 miles of an ophthalmic practice.

The number of optical vouchers paid for in 22/23 was 178,052, a decrease of 16% on 16/17.

53% of all sight tests carried out were for patients aged 60 or over.

45,440 unique patient assessments were carried out at NI PEARS, a 22% increase on 21/22. 40,499 or 89% of these were first assessments.

Number of Health Service Sight Tests and Vouchers Processed



Payments

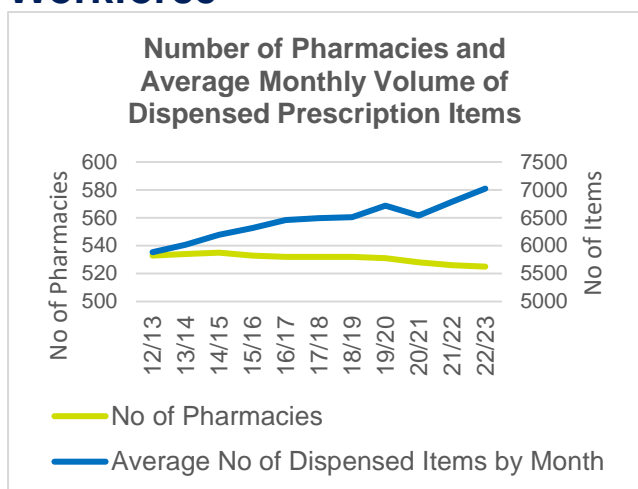
Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust)	Payment towards Ophthalmic services (£m)	Average payment per head of population (£)
Northern	5.8	12.00
Southern	4.6	11.60
South Eastern	4.5	12.00
Belfast	4.4	12.00
Western	4.0	12.90
Unknown	0.4	-
Northern Ireland	23.6	12.30

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Pharmaceutical Services – Community Pharmacy Key Facts

The complete 2022/23 Pharmaceutical Services Statistics report can be viewed on the [BSO FPS website](#).

Workforce



Local Government District	Community Pharmacies per 100,000 Population
Fermanagh & Omagh	38.8
Belfast	36.8
Derry City & Strabane	29.1
Newry, Mourne & Down	28.1
Causeway Coast & Glens	27.5
Mid Ulster	25.0
Ards & North Down	23.9
Antrim & Newtownabbey	22.8
Mid & East Antrim	22.1
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	21.6
Lisburn & Castlereagh	18.0
Northern Ireland	27.4

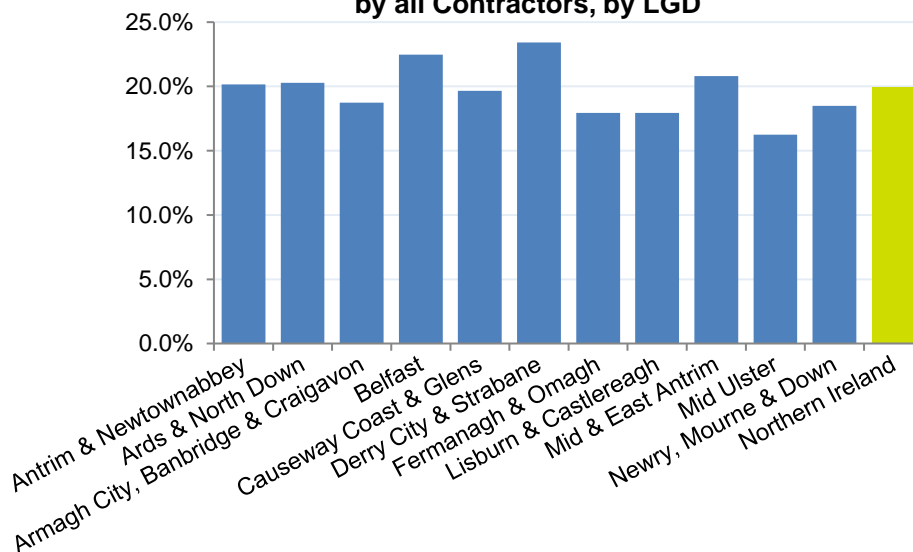
Patients

Over 99% of the population lived within 5 miles of a community pharmacy and 72% of all people lived within 1 mile of their nearest pharmacy.

At Northern Ireland level, the average distance from home to pharmacy was 0.9 miles.

Average dispensing volumes were highest in Mid & East Antrim, where pharmacies dispensed an average of 102,456 items. Fermanagh & Omagh had the lowest average figure at 63,294 items per pharmacy.

Percentage of Population Dispensed Anti-Depressants by all Contractors, by LGD



Average Items and Ingredient Cost per Pharmacy

Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust)	Average Total Number of Items per Pharmacy (000's)	Average total ingredient cost (before discount) per pharmacy (£000's)
South Eastern	90.5	1,032.8
Northern	90.5	967.2
Southern	87.9	892.4
Western	82.3	822.7
Belfast	73.5	792.7
Northern Ireland	84.4	895.3

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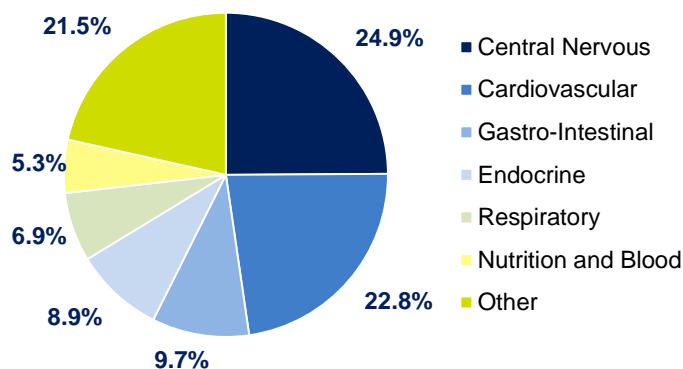
Pharmaceutical Services – Dispensing Key Facts

Dispensing

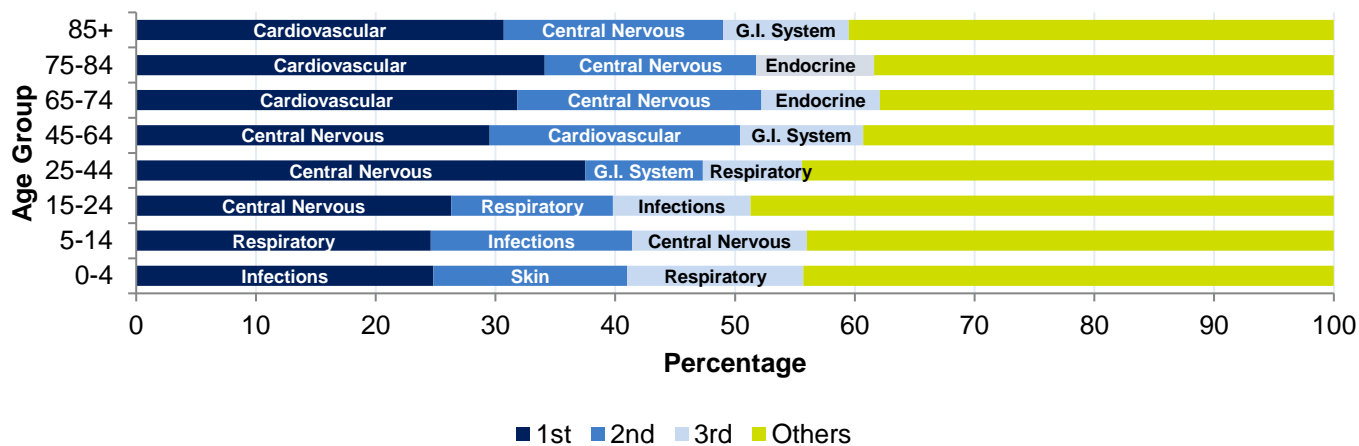
Top 10 most commonly dispensed medications

Medication	Items Dispensed (000s)	Typical Use
Atorvastatin	1,592	Treatment of high blood cholesterol
Omeprazole	1,461	Treatment of excess stomach acid
Co-codamol	1,253	Pain relief
Levothyroxine	1,102	Treatment for thyroid hormone deficiency
Sertraline	943	Treatment for depression & anxiety
Salbutamol	861	Treatment for respiratory conditions
Bisoprolol	851	Treatment for hypertension
Lansoprazole	809	Treatment of excess stomach acid
Aspirin	779	Pain relief/heart attack prevention
Amlodipine	775	Treatment for hypertension/angina

Items Dispensed by BNF Chapter



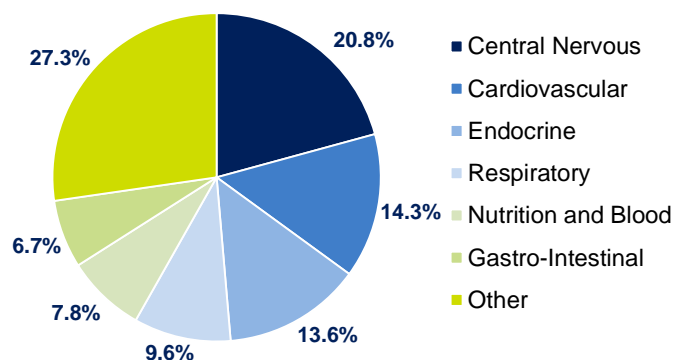
Three Most Commonly Dispensed Chapters by Age Group



Top 10 Medications with the Highest Total Ingredient Cost

Medication	Ingredient Cost (£m)	Typical Use
Apixaban	20.6	Treatment and prevention of blood clots
Melatonin	7.1	Treatment for insomnia
Sacubitril + Valsartan	6.6	Treatment for heart failure
Budesonide + Formoterol	6.3	Treatment for asthma
Omeprazole	5.8	Treatment for excess stomach acid
Dapagliflozin	5.7	Treatment for type 2 diabetes
Empagliflozin	5.3	Treatment for type 2 diabetes
Fluticasone + Salmeterol	4.8	Treatment for asthma
Lamotrigine	4.6	Treatment for epilepsy
Buprenorphine	4.6	Pain relief

Ingredient Cost by BNF Chapter



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Publication Notes

Family Practitioner Services

Family Practitioner Services (FPS) is part of the Business Services Organisation's (BSO) Operations Directorate. It provides a range of essential services to Health and Social Care organisations, primary care contractors and patients.

FPS calculates payments to health professionals in the dental, pharmacy, general medical and ophthalmic sectors through Northern Ireland. It also maintains the central register of patients registered with GP Practices in Northern Ireland, issuing medical cards and processing changes such as name, address and doctor.

It provides professional advice, support and information to customers and members of the public and maintains the pharmaceutical, dental, ophthalmic and the Northern Ireland Primary Medical Performers lists. FPS also provides the call and recall services for breast, cervical and bowel cancer screening in Northern Ireland.

About this publication

This report has been produced by independent statisticians within the FPS Information Unit. They are on secondment from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). This publication has been compiled in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics. For detailed tables relating to this report visit the [BSO FPS website](#) to select the relevant service area and annual statistics tables required.



This is a National Statistics Publication

The UK Statistics Authority designated these statistics as National Statistics on 11th May 2022. National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value. All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. These statistics were considered as part of a wider assessment of the BSO Family Practitioner Services statistics. Since the assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Next edition

This compendium publication is issued annually. It is expected that the next edition shall be published end-June/early-July following the next release of the individual annual reports in June 2024. In the interim, quarterly tables are published separately on the [BSO FPS website](#), accessible via the relevant services area. The quarterly figures are provisional until the annual publication for that year issues, at which point they are finalised. A [publication timetable](#) for future statistical publications is also available.

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Technical Notes

Target Audience

The target audience for this publication has been defined as: the Department of Health, Strategic Planning and Performance Group, HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland, health professionals, academics, HSC Stakeholders, the media and the general public.

Main usages

This publication contains official statistics on general medical, dental, ophthalmic and pharmaceutical activity for the most recent financial year (and earlier years where available on a comparable basis). It provides a broad overview of activity across the service areas, highlighting where more detailed breakdowns can be obtained.

The detailed information underpinning this summary can be used to support decision making, inform policy, provide advice to ministers, answer a wide range of Assembly Questions and Freedom of Information requests, for national and local press articles and, where appropriate, for international comparison.

Data Quality Summary

The data has been primary sourced from the Family Practitioner Payment System (FPPS) in respect of FPS activity and payment information. Resident population data has been sourced from official NISRA demographic statistics.

The FPPS is a business critical payment system which is subject to periodic audit. The data quality is assessed as very good based on the low percentage of claims which have to be adjusted following payment.

As an administrative data system, there will inevitably be some manual entry errors and, even for automated processes, there may be errors within the claims submitted by primary care contractors.

The extensive validation that occurs prior to payments being made, coupled with the consistency and variance checks carried out during the compilation of this publication means that the data provides a good representation of FPS activity for the years covered by the report.

Further information in relation to the background data quality reports and the Quality Assurance of Administrative Data Reports for the four service areas can be found on the relevant service area page of the [BSO FPS website](#).

Further Information

This is a supplementary document combining summary information from the previously released 2022/23 annual publications relating to the four main areas within FPS: general medical, dental, ophthalmic and pharmaceutical services.

Detailed information on **data sources, definitions and coverage** can be found within the relevant annual reports using the following links:

[General Medical Services](#)

[Dental Services](#)

[Ophthalmic Services](#)

[Pharmaceutical Services](#)

Or by visiting the [BSO FPS website](#).

Further information about Northern Ireland and its health services which may assist readers in interpreting this publication is available from [Family Practitioner Services](#).

Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2022/23

Key Facts

This statistical bulletin, the full annual FPS reports and others published by Information Unit within BSO are available to download from the [BSO FPS Internet site](#).