

August 2nd 2018

BY EMAIL

Tel: 028 9536 3863
Email: FOI.BSO@hscni.net

Our Ref: FOI 907

Dear [REDACTED]

Your request for information was received on June 27th 2018 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested with regards to total spend in Northern Ireland on specials (unlicensed medicines).

The requested information has been attached.

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Information Governance Manager,
2 Franklin Street,
Belfast,
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

Website: www.ico.org.uk
Phone: 0303 123 1113
Email: casework@ico.org.uk
Post: Information Commissioner's Office

3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place
Belfast
BT7 2JB

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

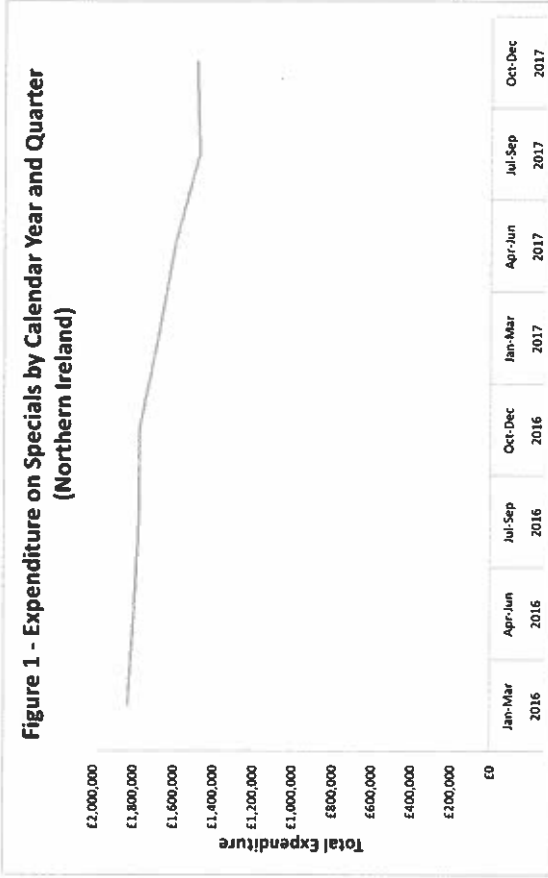
Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Liam McIvor', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Liam McIvor
Chief Executive

Table 1 - Expenditure on Specials by Calendar Year and Quarter (Northern Ireland)

Year	Quarter	Cost
2016	Jan-Mar	£1,829,918
2016	Apr-Jun	£1,801,924
2016	Jul-Sep	£1,779,138
2016	Oct-Dec	£1,776,915
2017	Jan-Mar	£1,681,564
2017	Apr-Jun	£1,600,998
2017	Jul-Sep	£1,479,379
2017	Oct-Dec	£1,491,821



Notes:

Expenditure is on prescriptions for specials that are prescribed in primary care and subsequently dispensed (by a Community Pharmacist, Appliance Supplier or Dispensing Doctor) and submitted to the Business Services Organisation (BSO) for payment.

The source of the information is the Family Practitioner Services Payment System, the BSO system which processes the payment of prescriptions in Northern Ireland.

We do not monitor trends in detail for specials in Northern Ireland because all items are hand priced.

Any policy in relation to the Drug Tariff is the responsibility of the Department of Health and not within the remit of the BSO.

Specials are identified using Dictionary of Medicines and Devices, selecting those drugs that are classified as a special or an import.