

23rd May 2024

BY EMAIL

Our Ref: FOI 2184

Dear ,

Your request for information was received on 18th April 2024 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 in relation to prescription items for the month October 2023.

Please find this information, along with explanatory notes, 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, as the BSO, along with all other public authorities are not obliged to accept internal review requests after this period has lapsed.

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:

Providing Support to Health and Social Care



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 cursive script that reads "Karen Bailey".

Karen Bailey
Chief Executive

FOI 2184: Prescribed Quantity in Primary Care in October 2023

This information has been sourced from the Family Practitioner Services within the HSC Business Services Organisation. The information comes from the Family Practitioner Services Pharmacy Payment System. The data provided covers prescriptions that are prescribed in Northern Ireland by a GP, nurse or any other non-medical prescribers (for example: pharmacists, optometrists) that are subsequently dispensed and submitted to BSO for payment. Data on secondary care prescribing and private prescriptions are not held by the Business Services Organisation. If a patient does not take a prescription to a dispenser and get it provided to them, then the information will not be included in the dataset. Post payment adjustments are included meaning that small differences in the data may be found, depending on when the data is extracted.

A prescription item is a single supply of a medicine, dressing or appliance written on a prescription form. For example, if a prescription form includes 3 medicines it is counted as 3 prescription items. Item figures do not provide any indication of the length of treatment or quantity of medicine prescribed.

The quantity of a product dispensed is measured in units depending on the formulation of the product. For example, where the formulation is a liquid, the quantity will be the number of millilitres or where the formulation is tablets or capsules the quantity will be the number of tablets or capsules.

BSO dispensing data does not capture the indication for which the drug has been prescribed/dispensed.

If statistics are to be used for comparative purposes to other parts of the UK, differences in prescription dispensing and processing in Northern Ireland compared to

other UK regions should be noted. For example, in Northern Ireland there is no outpatient dispensing.

FOI 2184: Prescribed Quantity in Primary Care in October 2023

Quantity	Items
7	19,061
14	67,403
Other	3,751,827
Total	3,838,291