

28th May 2024

BY EMAIL

████████████████████

Our Ref: FOI 2194

Dear ██████████

Your request for information was received on 2nd May 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 Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors.

Please find a response as below and attached.

I would like to request the following information regarding Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRI's) prescribed and dispensed by NHS Northern Ireland from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2023:

- 1. The total number of prescriptions for SSRI medications, including but not limited to fluoxetine (Prozac), sertraline (Zoloft), escitalopram (Lexapro), and paroxetine (Paxil), dispensed during the specified time period.**
- 2. Please provide a breakdown of the above data by individual SSRI medication, if available.**
- 3. Any additional relevant information or statistics related to SSRI prescriptions within the specified time period.**

Please also note Prescription Cost Analysis Publication [Prescription Cost Analysis - Business Services Organisation \(BSO\) Website \(hscni.net\)](#) provides details of dispensing down to individual product level.

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:

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,



Karen Bailey
Chief Executive

Number of Items Dispensed for SSRIs between 2019 and 2023 by Chemical Name and Product

Chemical Name and Product Name	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Citalopram	531,849	530,482	535,747	532,196	527,963
Cipramil 20mg tablets	417	378	383	359	320
Cipramil 40mg/ml drops	34	21	24	16	29
Citalopram 10mg tablets	155,259	155,047	157,531	158,032	155,992
Citalopram 20mg tablets	293,431	292,776	295,725	291,947	289,954
Citalopram 40mg tablets	80,292	79,758	79,450	79,225	79,153
Citalopram 40mg/ml oral drops sugar free	2,416	2,502	2,634	2,617	2,515
Dapoxetine	223	184	177	169	177
Dapoxetine 30mg tablets	144	77	99	113	109
Dapoxetine 60mg tablets	33	53	34	46	53
Priligy 30mg tablets	30	41	34	7	13
Priligy 60mg tablets	16	13	10	3	2
Escitalopram	91,505	92,372	91,837	92,486	93,992
Cipralelex 10mg tablets	812	858	705	644	624
Cipralelex 20mg tablets	836	700	595	576	509
Cipralelex 20mg/ml oral drops	16	12	26	29	22
Cipralelex 5mg tablets	275	231	237	215	201
Escitalopram 10mg tablets	40,967	40,834	40,156	40,754	41,531
Escitalopram 20mg tablets	32,223	33,028	32,717	32,349	32,709
Escitalopram 20mg/ml oral drops sugar free	308	300	307	270	312
Escitalopram 5mg tablets	16,068	16,409	17,094	17,649	18,084
Fluoxetine	406,316	412,250	416,213	411,118	411,085
Fluoxetine 10mg capsules	4,161	4,500	5,800	5,885	7,087
Fluoxetine 10mg tablets	1,356	976	707	436	
Fluoxetine 20mg capsules	383,059	389,901	391,246	383,019	377,628
Fluoxetine 20mg dispersible tablets sugar free	117	125	176	220	154

Fluoxetine 20mg/5ml oral solution	5,130	5,073	5,156	4,735	3,846
Fluoxetine 20mg/5ml oral solution sugar free	1,817	2,064	2,489	2,518	2,148
Fluoxetine 30mg capsules	221	673	547	1,986	3,076
Fluoxetine 40mg capsules	2,222	2,345	3,066	4,025	6,871
Fluoxetine 60mg capsules	7,121	6,266	6,997	8,260	10,253
Olena 20mg dispersible tablets	3	3	6	7	11
Oxactin 20Mg Capsules	4				
Prozac 20mg capsules	1,018	278			
Prozac 20mg/5ml liquid	77	25			
Prozep 20mg/5ml oral solution	10	21	23	27	11
Fluvoxamine	889	966	1,003	1,007	940
Faverin 100mg tablets	40	51	47	32	12
Faverin 50mg tablets	73	67	75	69	61
Fluvoxamine 100mg tablets	395	423	475	459	382
Fluvoxamine 50mg tablets	381	425	406	447	485
Paroxetine	42,358	41,496	40,118	38,947	37,804
Paroxetine 10mg tablets	3,696	3,763	3,830	3,862	4,048
Paroxetine 10mg/5ml oral suspension sugar free	361	234	201	119	14
Paroxetine 20mg tablets	24,447	23,683	22,806	22,002	21,215
Paroxetine 30mg tablets	11,807	11,722	11,220	10,838	10,391
Paroxetine 40mg tablets	838	1,024	1,060	1,123	1,236
Seroxat 10mg tablets	179	111	99	104	113
Seroxat 20mg tablets	707	669	638	614	531
Seroxat 20mg/10ml liquid	99	33	17	17	4
Seroxat 30mg tablets	224	257	247	268	252
Sertraline	745,452	806,082	867,069	923,186	990,305
Lustral 100mg tablets	757	816	838	786	739
Lustral 50mg tablets	798	820	800	718	606
Sertraline 100mg tablets	373,174	406,694	437,748	464,717	496,861

Sertraline 150mg tablets					1,148
Sertraline 200mg tablets					468
Sertraline 25mg tablets				3,612	8,634
Sertraline 50mg tablets	370,723	397,752	427,683	453,353	481,849
Total	1,818,592	1,883,832	1,952,164	1,999,109	2,062,266

Prescription Items and Quantity for Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) 2019 - 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. All information is for prescriptions prescribed in Primary care and dispensed by a community pharmacist, dispensing doctor or appliance contractor. 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.

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

Information has been provided where the chemical name is Citalopram, Dapoxetine, Escitalopram, Fluoxetine, Fluvoxamine, Paroxetine and Sertraline.

A prescription item is a single supply of a medicine, dressing or appliance written on a prescription form. If a prescription form includes three medicines it is counted as three prescription items. Prescription 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. For this reason, and because products can be of different strengths, it does not make sense to aggregate quantities to produce overall totals/sub-totals.

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.

[Redacted]

From: FOI BSO
Sent: 29 May 2024 12:35
To: [Redacted]
Subject: RE: FOI 2194: Freedom of Information Request - Total Number of SSRI Prescriptions Dispensed by NHS Northern Ireland (January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2023)

Dear [Redacted]

I can advise that the information provided relates to prescriptions dispensed in Northern Ireland and submitted to BSO for payment. For data covering the rest of the UK the requestor would need to contact the relevant organisation in each country.

England - [Freedom of Information | NHSBSA](#)
Wales - [Freedom of information - NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership](#)
Scotland - [Freedom of Information \(FOI\) and Environmental Information Regulation \(EIR\) requests - Contact us - Public Health Scotland](#)

I hope this is of assistance.

Best regards

[Redacted signature block]



From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 29 May 2024 10:42

To: FOI BSO <FOI.BSO@hscni.net>

Subject: Re: FOI 2194: Freedom of Information Request - Total Number of SSRI Prescriptions Dispensed by NHS Northern Ireland (January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2023)

Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email.

May I just double check, the last PDF that was sent regarding the SSRI dispenses. Does this data represent the whole of the United Kingdom?

Kindest regards,

[REDACTED]

On Tue, 28 May 2024 at 11:36, FOI BSO <FOI.BSO@hscni.net> wrote:

"This email is covered by the disclaimer found at the end of the message."

Dear [REDACTED]

Please find attached a formal response letter in relation to your freedom of information request.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



From: FOI BSO

Sent: 02 May 2024 10:02

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Freedom of Information Request - Total Number of SSRI Prescriptions Dispensed by NHS Northern Ireland (January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2023)

Dear [REDACTED]

Please accept this email as a formal acknowledgement of your freedom of information request below.

Your request has been logged under FOI 2194.

A formal response to your request will be issued to you as soon as possible, and no later than 30th May 2024.

We will contact you in advance if there is likely to be a delay in issuing a formal response, along with any reason(s) for delay.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 May 2024 22:00
To: FOI BSO <FOI.BSO@hscni.net>
Subject: Freedom of Information Request - Total Number of SSRI Prescriptions Dispensed by NHS Northern Ireland (January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2023)

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Freedom of Information Team,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I would like to request the following information regarding Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRI's) prescribed and dispensed by NHS Northern Ireland from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2023:

1. The total number of prescriptions for SSRI medications, including but not limited to fluoxetine (Prozac), sertraline (Zoloft), escitalopram (Lexapro), and paroxetine (Paxil), dispensed during the specified time period.
2. Please provide a breakdown of the above data by individual SSRI medication, if available.
3. Any additional relevant information or statistics related to SSRI prescriptions within the specified time period.

I understand that under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am entitled to a response within 20 working days. If you require any further clarification or details regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [REDACTED]

I would prefer to receive the requested information electronically, in a machine-readable format such as Excel or CSV.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to receiving the requested information within the statutory timeframe.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

The information contained in this email and any attachments is confidential and intended solely for the attention and use of the named addressee(s). No confidentiality or privilege is waived or lost by any mistransmission. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, please inform the sender by return email and destroy all copies. Any views or opinions presented are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of HSC. The content of emails sent and received via the HSC network may be monitored for the purposes of ensuring compliance with HSC policies and procedures. Please be aware that e-mail may not be a secure medium. This e-mail (whether you are the sender or the recipient) may be monitored and monitoring and blocking software may be used. While HSC takes precautions in scanning outgoing emails for computer viruses, no responsibility will be accepted by HSC in the event that the email is infected by a computer virus. Recipients are therefore encouraged to take their own precautions in relation to virus scanning. All emails held by HSC may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All emails held by HSC may also be disclosed, where required, under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.