English Prescribing Dataset Release Guidance

Version: v003

Document Release Note

Document Name: English Prescribing Dataset Release Guidance

Document Details Name	Version Number	Description
English Prescribing Dataset Release Guidance	v003	This document describes the content and some instruction on how to use the English Prescribing Dataset that is released using the NHSBSA Open Data Portal.

Revision Details Revision Number	Revision Date	Revision Description	Page Number	Previous Page Number	Action Taken	Addenda/ New Page
002	10/06/2020	Update guidance regarding transformation of EPD to	6-7		Guidance on how to manipulate EPD data to recreate PLP and DPI datasets	
002	10/06/2020	Change document title remove reference to Statistics Team	Cover page		Removed 'Statistics at NHSBSA'. Inserted Version number on cover page	
002	10/06/2020	Change contact details for NHSBSA	10		Written address updated to reflect Information Services Team who are data owners.	
002	18/06/2020	Added details of NHS re-organisation.	6		Added information and supporting documentation for NHS re-organisation in April 2020.	
003	26/06/2023	Change contact details for NHSBSA	10		Email address updated	

About this document

NHSBSA publishes detailed information on prescribing by each practice in England. This document describes the content of the main data release and provides instructions for users of data that was previously published by NHS BSA and NHS Digital.

Information in this document has been organised as follows:

Chapters:

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English Prescribing Dataset

Summary

The English Prescribing dataset contains detailed information on prescriptions issued in England that have been dispensed in England, Wales, Scotland, Guernsey, Alderney, Jersey, and the Isle of Man.

The dataset combines elements of the Detailed Prescribing Information (DPI) data previously released by NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) via the ISP portal, and the Practice Level Prescribing in England (PLP) data released by NHS Digital via their website. It is intended to replace both of those sources.

These datasets have been brought together to provide end users with a single comprehensive, consistent and accessible source of prescribing information.

Contents of the dataset

The data summarises 'prescription items', sometimes called 'items'. This refers to an instance of a type of drug, appliance, dressing or reagent that is requested by a prescription form. For example, a prescription form may list two items as so:

- 'Warfarin 1mg tablets 84 tablet'

- 'Warfarin 3mg tablets 56 tablet'

Such a form would include two items; the quantity of the first item is 84, and the quantity of the second item is 56.

The data includes figures on the number and quantity of prescription items that are dispensed each month, and information relating to costs for General Practitioner Practices and Cost Centres in England.

The data relates to items that have been prescribed in England and dispensed in England, Scotland, Wales, Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey. It does not include items that have been dispensed in England but prescribed in another country.

It includes for each General Practitioner (GP) Practice or Cost Centre:

- All prescribed and dispensed medicines (by British National Formulatory (BNF) Chapter, Chemical Substance and Presentation);

- All prescribed and dispensed dressings and appliances (by BNF Chapter, Section and Presentation);

- **Items** – the total number of times that the medicine, dressing or appliance appeared on prescription forms that were prescribed and dispensed;

- **Quantity** – The quantity of a medicine, dressing or appliance for which an individual item was prescribed and dispensed, for each BNF Presentation. This represents a pseudo pack size, to illustrate the typical range of prescribed quantities of a given presentation;

- **Total Quantity** – the total quantity of a medicine, dressing or appliance prescribed and dispensed for each BNF Presentation. This is calculated by multiplying Quantity by Items;

- The **'Net Ingredient Cost (NIC)'** of the items normally based on the price given in the Drug Tariff or published wholesale prices;

- The '**Actual Cost'** that accounts for the national average discount and some payments to dispensers;

- **ADQ Usage** - Average Daily Quantity (ADQ) is the typical daily dose of a medication, prescribed to adult patients by GP Practices;

- **Practice Name** and **Address** details, where known; and

- A column marked '**Unidentified'** which can be used to include or exclude information from prescriptions forms for which a practice could not be identified (see below for more information).

This data is sourced from the NHSBSA Information Services Data Warehouse.

Exclusions

The data excludes:

- Data relating to prescriptions issued in Wales, Scotland, Guernsey, Alderney, Jersey, and the Isle of Man;

- Any patient identifiable data;

- Items not dispensed, disallowed and those returned to the contractor for further clarification;

- Prescriptions prescribed and dispensed in Prisons, Hospitals and Private prescriptions;

- Items prescribed but not presented for dispensing or not submitted to NHS Prescription Services by the dispenser.

NHS Re-organisation April 2020

From the 1st April 2020 a new organisation structure was implemented by the NHSBSA as agreed by NHS England. Reporting against this new structure will commence from April 2020 dispensing data. Data prior to this will remain in the old structure and will not be updated.

Summary of April 2020 structure and changes for EPD:

- 7 regions replacing 4 regions

- 42 STPs replacing 27 Area Teams & 14 Local Offices

You can find futher information about these changes and how they impact our data at https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-structure-re-organisation-implementation.

You can also find further information on the structural changes at [NHS Digital's change summary – 2020 STP, CCG and commissioning hub reconfiguration page](#). NHS Digital have also produced an [April 2020 reconfiguration mapping file](#).

Unidentified Practice Data

This dataset includes some records where the prescription form cannot be linked to a practice or cost centre.

Sometimes the NHSBSA is sent a prescription form that has incomplete or missing information about the practice.

In the dataset that information is marked with '**Unidentified Doctors'** as the Practice Name. These cases typically account for less than 0.1% of all prescribed items.*

Unidentified Doctors data can be put in two groups:

1. where the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) can be identified; these are shown with a Practice Code and Address relating to the CCG, and will hold values for CCG, Area Team and Region; and

2. where the CCG cannot be identified. These are shown with no Practice Code or Address, and all other organisation levels will be marked as 'Unidentified'.

Records that fall into the second category are referred to by NHSBSA as **'National Unidentified'**, which is defined as follows:

National unidentified totals include data for prescriptions that could not be allocated to a practice or their Commissioner / Provider Organisation. These totals may include prescriptions written by prescribers who have not been linked to a practice for more than six months. The reason for this six month 'rule' is that prescriptions are only valid for six months.

For reporting purposes, the 'Unidentified' column can be used to restrict the dataset to return only unidentified practice records; adding a further filter to the region name column will allow the inclusion or exclusion of national unidentified records.

* 0.05%, based on analysis of March 2019 prescribing data.

Using large data files

If you're downloading large volumes of data, for example, all English Prescribing for one month you may need a specific IT solution or an add-on that can handle large data sets, for example the Microsoft PowerPivot add-on for Excel.

Other add-ons are available and you should use whichever add-on or bespoke solution best meets your needs.

The [PowerPivot add-on is available from Microsoft](#).

Once PowerPivot has been installed, to load large files, follow these instructions:

1. Start Excel as normal

2. Click on the PowerPivot tab

3. Click on the PowerPivot window icon (top left)

4. In the PowerPivot window, click on the 'from other sources' icon

5. In the table import wizard, for example, scroll to the bottom and select 'text file'

6. Browse to the file you want to open and choose the file extension you require, for example '.csv'

Once the data has been imported, you can view it as a table or view and manipulate it as a graph.

For users of previous datasets (PLP and DPI)

The new dataset combines elements of the existing PLP data - from NHS Digital - and DPI datasets - from the NHS BSA Information Services Portal.

These datasets have been brought together to provide end users with a single, comprehensive, consistent and accessible source of prescribing information.

While the new dataset will bring about benefits we recognise that existing users will have based reporting on the existing versions of the data, or use one or both of the datasets in downstream applications.

For consistency with previous reporting, the following steps can be taken to map the new DPI data back to the existing PLP and DPI datasets.

For Pracrice Level Prescribing Users (PLP)
The existing PLP dataset does not include data for unidentified practices. These are included in the new DPI data. So filter out any rows with a value of **TRUE** in the **Unidentified** column to remove these practices, then remove the **Unidentified** column. The current PLP also contains the fields:

- SHA

- PCT

- PRACTICE

- BNF CODE

- BNF NAME

- ITEMS

- NIC

- ACT COST

- QUANTITY

- PERIOD

The corresponding fields in the new EPD data set are:

- STP_CODE

- PCO_CODE

- BNF_CODE

- BNF_DESCRIPTION

- ITEMS

- NIC

- ACTUAL_COST

- TOTAL_QUANTITY

- YEAR_MONTH

As the data in the new EPD file is disaggregated across prescribed quantity, in order to get to the format of the original PLP file you must group the data by STP_CODE, PCO_CODE, BNF_CODE, BNF_DESCRIPTION, and YEAR_MONTH. Then sum ITEMS, NIC, ACTUAL_COST and TOTAL_QUANTITY.

For Detailed Prescribing Information Users (DPI)

The existing DPI dataset does not include all of the columns that feature in the new DPI dataset. So **exclude** the following columns to get the DPI column format:

- ADDRESS_1

- ADDRESS_2

- ADDRESS_3

- ADDRESS_4

- POSTCODE

- BNF_CHEMICAL_SUBSTANCE

- BNF_CHAPTER_PLUS_CODE

- TOTAL_QUANTITY

- UNIDENTIFIED

- YEAR_MONTH

The new dataset includes Unidentified Regions (and any Area Teams, CCGs or Practices that sit within them). So filter out all rows with **'Unidentified'** in the **'Region Name'** column to get the same rows as the DPI format.

Contact us

Feedback is important to us; we welcome any questions and comments relating to this document.

Please quote 'English Prescribing Dataset Release Guidance' in the subject title of any correspondence.

You can contact us by:

Email: DataServicesSupport@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

You can also write to us at:

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