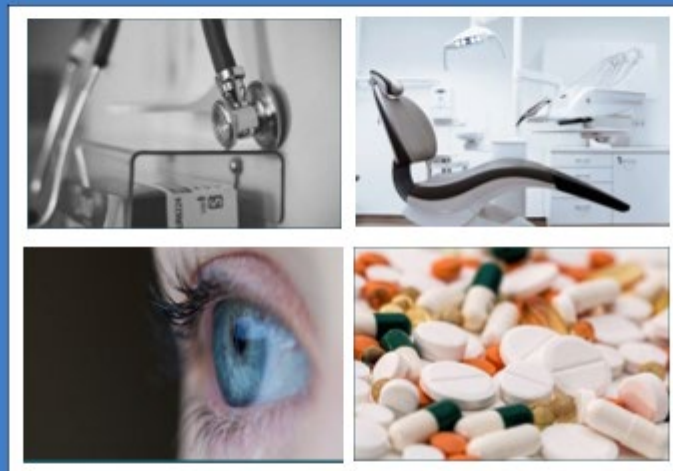


# Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland



**Key Facts**  
**2021/22**

**Published 7 July 2022**

## Purpose

This is a supplementary document combining key facts from the previously released 2021/22 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](#)

## Published by

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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](mailto:Info.BSO@hscni.net)

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

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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 2021/22

## Key Facts

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# Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2021/22

## 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 2021 and March 2022. It is a supplementary document summarising each of the standalone reports previously published in June 2022. 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 in this most recent year.

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 11<sup>th</sup> 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 2021/22

## Key Facts Overview

The complete 2021/22 FPS Statistics reports can be viewed on the [BSO FPS website](#).

### General Medical Services



- **There were 319 active GP practices in Northern Ireland on 31 March 2022**  
Approximately 9% decrease (or 31 practices) on 2014.
- **There were 1,419 registered GPs (excluding Locums)**  
Of these 59% were female and 41% were male, a shift in gender profile from 2014 (46% / 54%).
- **More than 2 million registered patients**  
This included 52,409 new patient registrations.
- **BSO processed £342.7m of payments towards the cost of GP Services**  
The average payment per registered patient was £169, an increase of £45 per patient since 2017/18.

### Dental Services



- **There were 365 health service dental practices in Northern Ireland on 31 March 2022**  
A reduction of 3 practices compared to 2021.
- **There were 1,146 registered dentists**  
An increase of almost 13% (or 131 dentists) since 2012.
- **The number of patients registered with a health service dentist was almost 1.3m**  
This was approximately 67% of the Northern Ireland population.
- **The gross cost of dental services in 2021/22 was £143.8m**  
This included £43.7m in Covid-19 Support Payments and £13.1m in patient contributions.

### Ophthalmic Services



- **There were 271 ophthalmic practices carrying out health service eye tests in Northern Ireland on 31 March 2022**  
4.2% higher than in 2014 however this figure has remained the same since 2018.
- **There were 687 registered ophthalmic practitioners**  
An increase of 13.4% over the last five years from 2017.
- **The total number of health service eye tests carried out was 436,000**  
For every 4 tests, 3 were for patients under 16 or 60 years old and over.
- **The total cost for ophthalmic services in 2021/22 was £24.8m**  
A 1.6% increase on 2020/21.

### Pharmaceutical Services



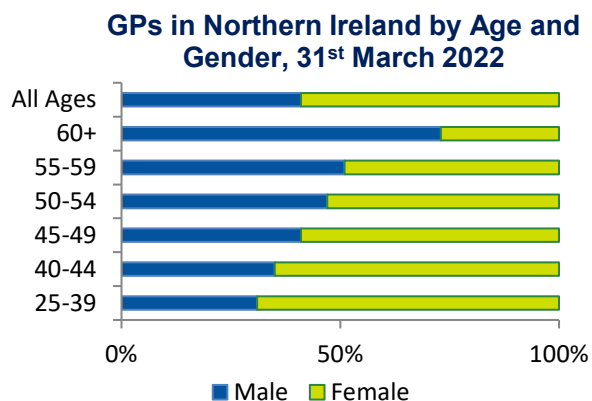
- **There were 526 pharmacies in Northern Ireland on 31 March 2022**  
A reduction of two pharmacies on 2021 and lowest figure recorded in the last ten years.
- **There were 43.2m items dispensed in 2021/22 (all contractors)**  
An increase of 3.6% on 2020/21.
- **There were 42.9m items dispensed in 2021/22 (pharmacies only)**  
An average of 81,482 items per pharmacy, an increase of 4.1% on 2020/21.
- **The total ingredient cost for all items dispensed in Northern Ireland was £456.2m**  
An increase of 0.4% on 2020/21.

# Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2021/22

## General Medical Services Key Facts

The complete 2021/22 General Medical Services Statistics report can be viewed on the [BSO FPS website](#).

### Workforce



Local Government District	GP Practices per 100,000 Registered Patients
Mid & East Antrim	17.9
Belfast	17.6
Newry, Mourne & Down	17.6
Causeway Coast & Glens	16.6
Mid Ulster	16.5
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	15.4
Fermanagh & Omagh	15.3
Ards & North Down	14.6
Derry City & Strabane	13.1
Lisburn & Castlereagh	12.5
Antrim & Newtownabbey	12.0
Northern Ireland	15.8

### Patients

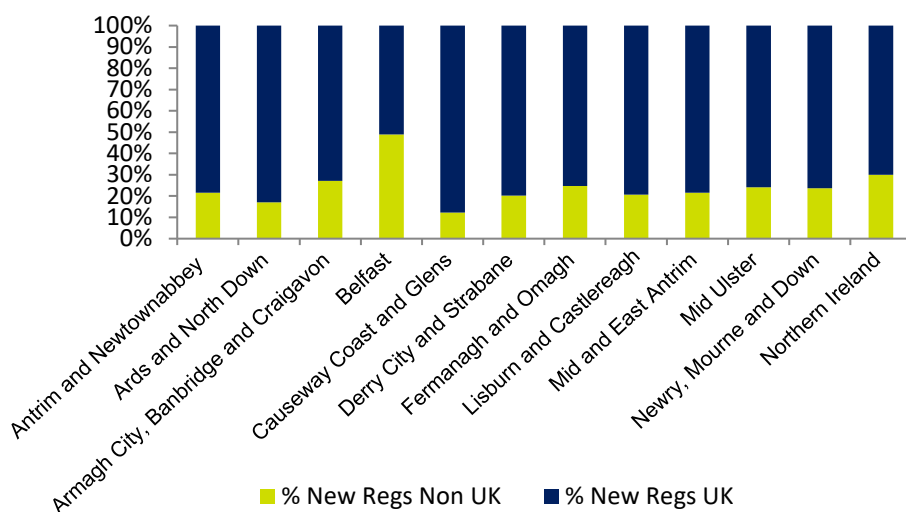
Just over 2,022,000 patients were registered with a GP practice. There were approximately 52,500 new patient registrations and approximately 39,000 patients transferred practices.

The number of patients registered at a GP practice in NI has increased by 5% from 2013/14. New registrations increased by almost 20% since 2020/21 as Covid-19 had contributed to lower numbers.

Average number of patients per practice was 6,340.

97% of the population lived within 5 miles of a GP practice, 87% live within 3 miles.

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



### Payments

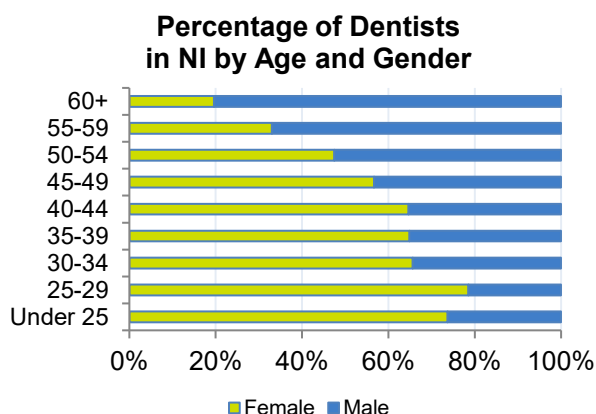
Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust)	BSO payment towards GP services (£m)	Average payment per patient (£)
Northern	81.0	169
Belfast	75.6	171
Southern	69.1	161
Western	61.5	184
South Eastern	55.5	164
Northern Ireland	342.7	169

# Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2021/22

## Dental Services Key Facts

The complete 2021/22 Dental Services Statistics report can be viewed on the [BSO FPS website](#).

### Workforce



Local Government District	Dental Practices per 100,000 Resident Patients
Belfast	24.9
Mid and East Antrim	22.8
Fermanagh & Omagh	21.9
Newry, Mourne & Down	21.6
Ards & North Down	17.8
Causeway Coast & Glens	17.2
Derry City & Strabane	17.2
Mid Ulster	16.4
Lisburn & Castlereagh	16.0
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	14.4
Antrim & Newtownabbey	13.8
Northern Ireland	19.0

### Patients

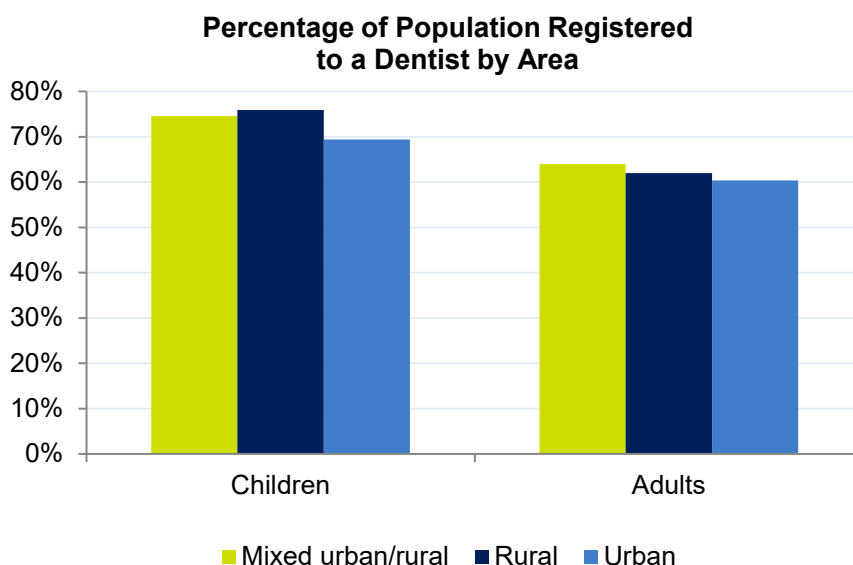
In the 18-44 age group, there are 77% of females registered to a dentist compared to 62% of males.

Registration rates in the 0-4 age group have dropped from 48% in 2020 to 30% in 2022.

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

Over 420,000 adults were seen for treatment, a 45% increase on 20/21 but 43% less than in 19/20.

Almost 76,000 children received dental treatment in excess of the basic treatments covered under capitation, an increase of 47% on 20/21 but a drop of 37% on 19/20.



### Payments

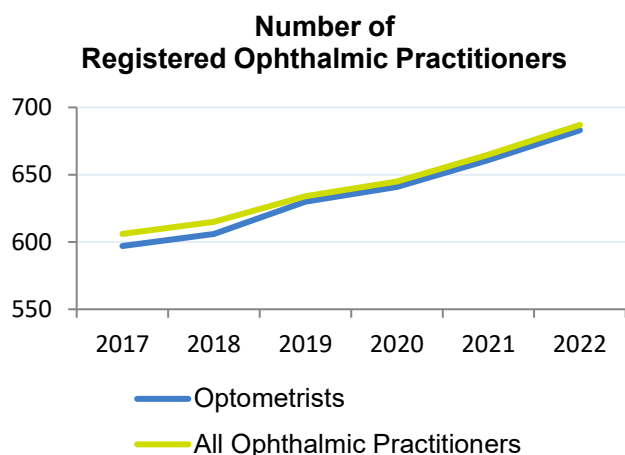
Local Commissioning Group (Health Trust)	HSCNI payment towards dental services (£m)	Average payment per resident patient (£)
Belfast	32.3	83.70
Northern	31.5	63.80
Southern	26.7	69.20
South Eastern	20.3	52.40
Western	19.9	73.90
Northern Ireland	130.6	68.10

# Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2021/22

## Ophthalmic Services Key Facts

The complete 2021/22 Ophthalmic Services Statistics report can be viewed on the [BSO FPS website](#).

### Workforce



Local Government District	Ophthalmic Practices per 100,000 Population
Fermanagh & Omagh	18.5
Antrim & Newtownabbey	16.6
Causeway Coast & Glens	15.1
Mid Ulster	15.1
Derry City & Strabane	14.5
Mid & East Antrim	14.2
Belfast	13.9
Ards & North Down	12.9
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	12.6
Newry, Mourne & Down	12.4
Lisburn & Castlereagh	12.0
Northern Ireland	14.1

### Patients

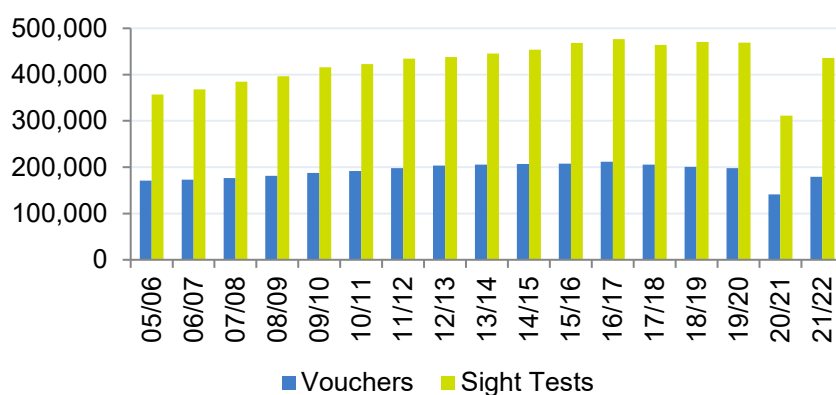
95% of the population lived within 5 miles of an ophthalmic practice.

24% of the female population attended a sight test compared to 19% of males.

52% of all sight tests carried out were for patients aged 60 or over.

37,384 unique patient assessments were carried out at NI PEARS, a 22% increase on 20/21. 33,552 or 90% 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	6.2	12.80
Southern	5.1	12.70
South Eastern	4.8	12.90
Belfast	4.6	12.70
Western	4.2	13.70
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>12.90</b>



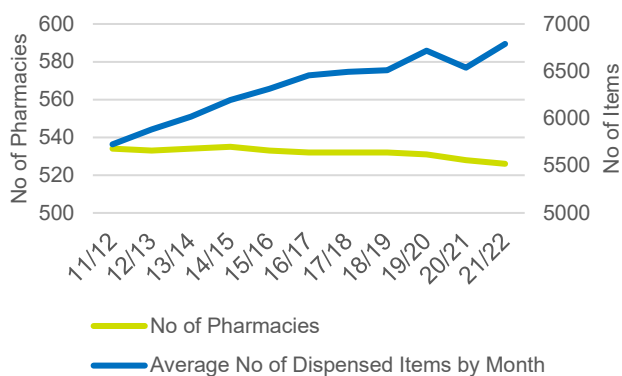
# Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2021/22

## Pharmaceutical Services – Community Pharmacy Key Facts

The complete 2021/22 Pharmaceutical Services Statistics report can be viewed on the [BSO FPS website](#).

### Workforce

Number of Pharmacies and Average Monthly Volume of Dispensed Prescription Items



Local Government District	Community Pharmacies per 100,000 Population
Fermanagh & Omagh	38.9
Belfast	37.2
Derry City & Strabane	29.1
Newry, Mourne & Down	28.3
Causeway Coast & Glens	27.6
Mid Ulster	25.1
Ards & North Down	24.0
Antrim & Newtownabbey	22.8
Mid & East Antrim	22.1
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	21.8
Lisburn & Castlereagh	18.1
Northern Ireland	27.6

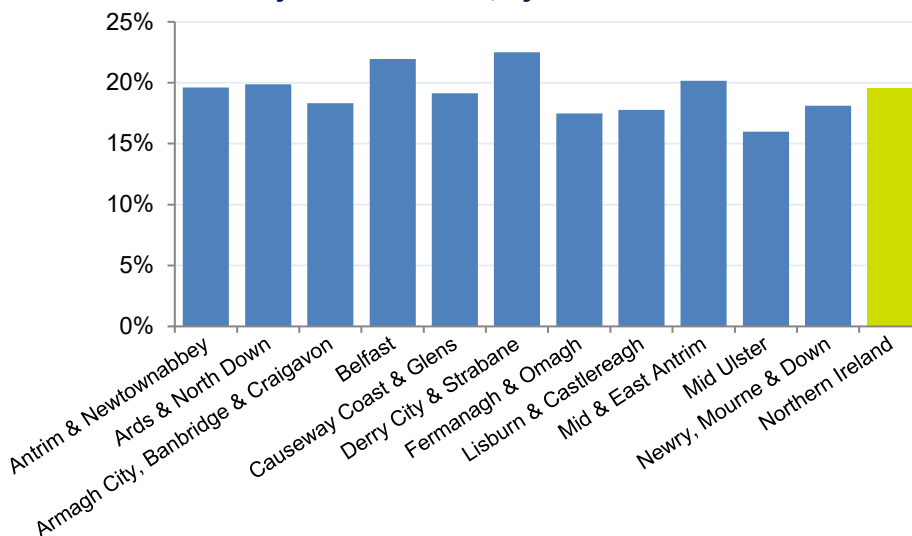
### Patients

Over 99% of the population lived within 5 miles of a community pharmacy and 72.6% of all people lived within 1 mile of their nearest pharmacy.

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 97,963 items. Fermanagh & Omagh had the lowest average figure at 61,043 items per pharmacy.

Percentage of Population Dispensed Anti-Depressants by all Contractors, by LGD in 2021/22



### 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	87.7	971.3
Northern	87.1	900.8
Southern	85.2	830.0
Western	79.1	764.3
Belfast	71.2	737.6
Northern Ireland	81.5	834.5

# Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2021/22

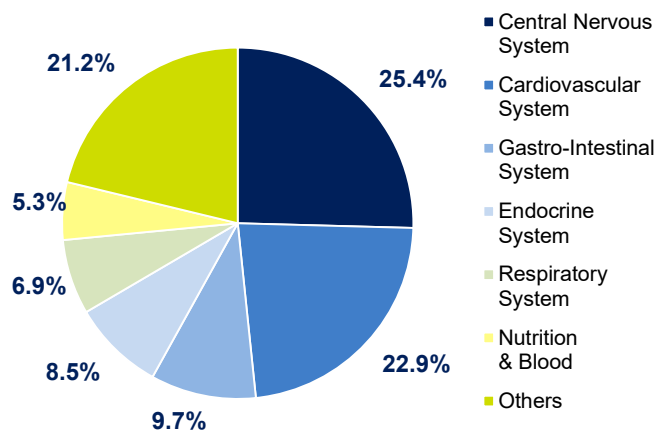
## Pharmaceutical Services – Dispensing Key Facts

### Dispensing

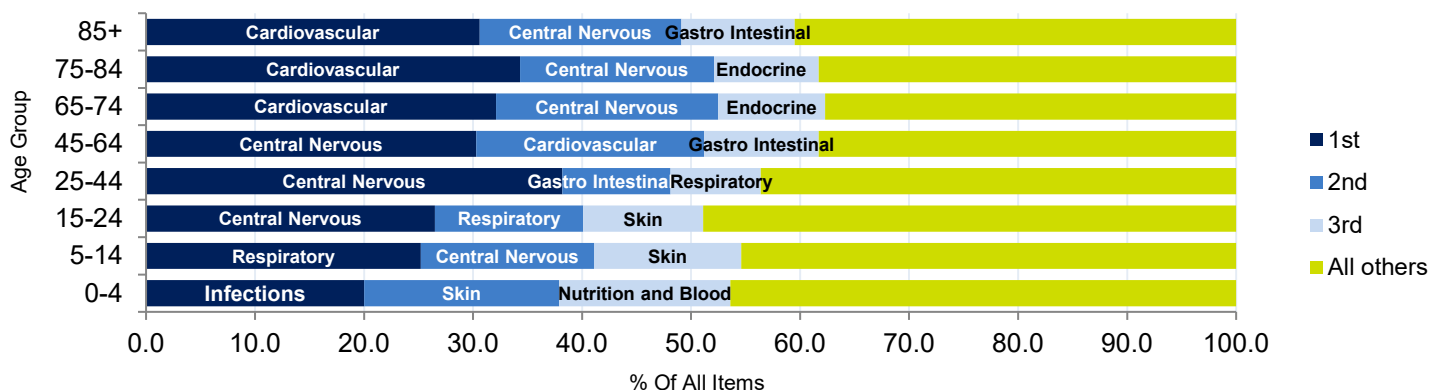
#### Top 10 most commonly dispensed medications

Medication	Items Dispensed (000s)	Typical Use
Atorvastatin	1,474	Treatment of high blood cholesterol
Omeprazole	1,431	Treatment of excess stomach acid
Co-codamol	1,250	Pain relief
Levothyroxine	1,088	Treatment for thyroid hormone deficiency
Sertraline	880	Treatment for depression & anxiety
Bisoprolol	828	Treatment for hypertension
Salbutamol	822	Treatment for respiratory conditions
Aspirin	797	Pain relief/heart attack prevention
Lansoprazole	790	Treatment of excess stomach acid
Amlodipine	731	Treatment for hypertension/angina

#### Total Items Dispensed by BNF Chapter



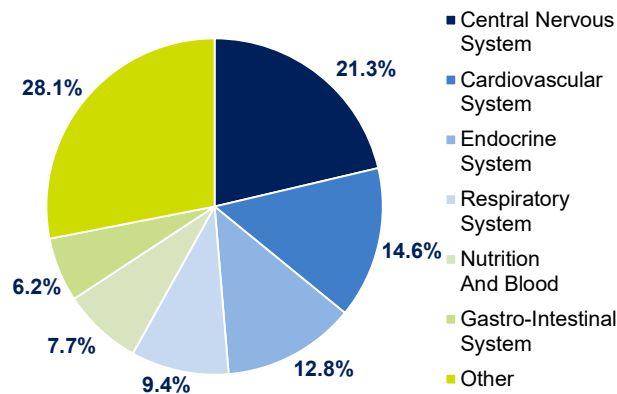
#### Three Most Commonly Dispensed Chapters by Age Group



#### Top 10 Medications with the Highest Ingredient Cost

Medication	Ingredient Cost (£m)	Typical Use
Apixaban	18.8	Treatment and prevention of blood clots
Budesonide + Formoterol	6.2	Treatment for asthma
Melatonin	5.9	Treatment for insomnia
Fluticasone + Salmeterol	5.2	Treatment for asthma
Co-codamol	4.9	Pain relief
Lamotrigine	4.7	Treatment for epilepsy
Sacubitril + Valsartan	4.7	Treatment for heart failure
Buprenorphine	4.5	Pain relief
Insulin Aspart	4.4	Treatment for diabetes
Omeprazole	4.4	Treatment for excess stomach acid

#### Total Ingredient Cost by BNF Chapter



# Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2021/22

## Key Facts

### 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 2023. 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.

# Family Practitioner Services Statistics for Northern Ireland 2021/22

## Key Facts

### 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 primarily 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 2021/22 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 2021/22

## 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](#).