



## Prescriptions by GPs in Wales, 2017-18

19 September 2018

SFR 77/2018

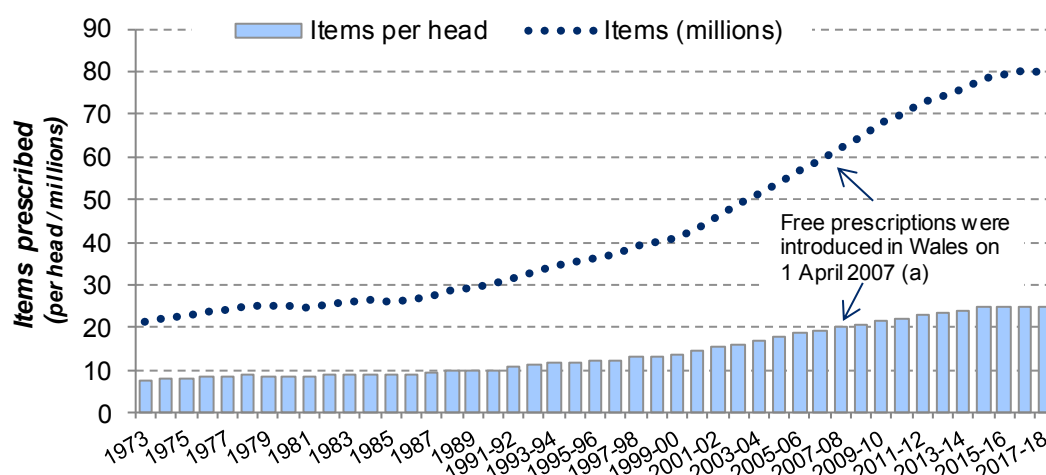
Prescription statistics published here are based on information obtained from prescriptions sent for payment to [Prescribing Services, NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership](#).

Data are presented largely in terms of 'prescription items' which refers to each item prescribed by a doctor on a prescription form. Full definitions are included in the [Notes](#) section at the end of the release.

A large amount of complex data is available; it should be interpreted with the [explanatory notes](#), and with reference to the [Quality report](#).

A separate statistical release titled '[Prescriptions dispensed in the community](#)' is published on a calendar basis and includes the detailed Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) data. The next edition is due out in May 2019.

### Chart 1: Prescription items, since 1973



Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

(a) see [Notes](#) for further details

- The number of items prescribed in Wales marginally decreased, from 80.0 million in 2016-17 to 79.9 million in 2017-18 (0.2%), the first annual reduction since 1985. Note that there were 4 fewer working days during 2017-18 than in 2016-17 (mainly due to Easter) which may partly explain the fall.
- Over the longer term, items prescribed increased by 58.6 million (or 275%) since 1973, and by 17.9 million (or 29%) since 2007-08.
- In 2017-18 there were 24.9 prescription items per head (registered with a GP), down 0.4% since 2016-17 (25.0), but up 228% from 1973 (7.6), and up 25% from 2007-08 (20.0).

### About this release

This release gives information on items which were prescribed by GPs in Wales, and dispensed, during the financial year. These are referred to in the release as items 'prescribed' by GPs. Items prescribed but not dispensed are excluded.

The release highlights the main trends and patterns in prescribing over previous years, and aims to provide statistical context for current prescribing policy in Wales.

Further data can be found on [StatsWales](#), our interactive data dissemination service.

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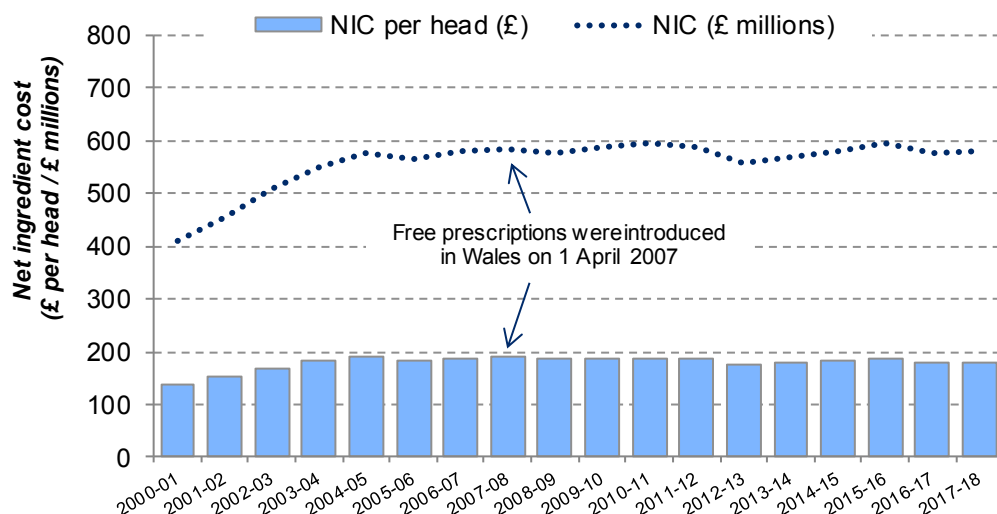
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## Prescribing trends

**Chart 2** shows the net ingredient cost (NIC) - see note (a) - of items prescribed by GPs in Wales, and the NIC per head of population registered with a GP

**Chart 2: Net ingredient cost, 2000-01 onwards**



Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

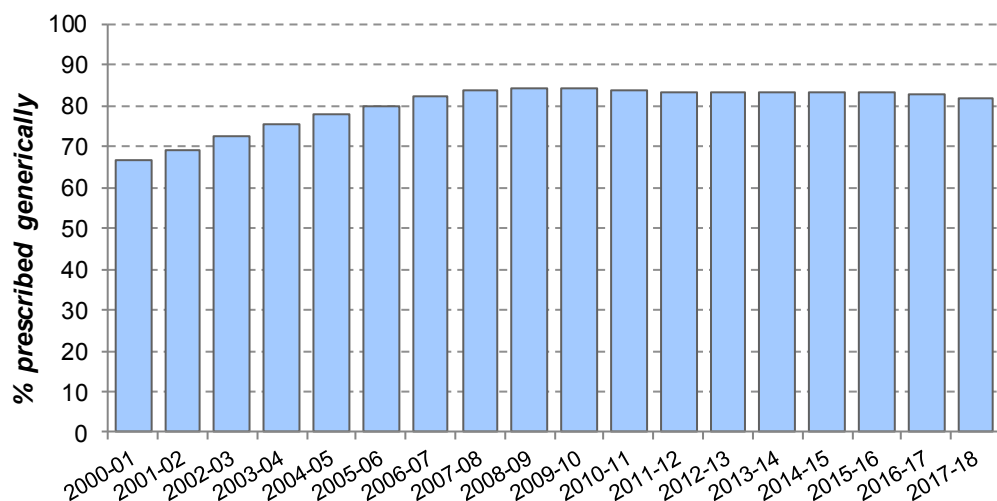
(a) Refers to the cost (which the dispenser is reimbursed) of the drug before discounts and does not include any dispensing costs or fees. It does not include any adjustment where the patient has purchased a pre-payment certificate (before 2007).

The net ingredient cost of items prescribed by GPs in Wales in 2017-18 was £578 million, up 41% from £411 million in 2000-01 but down 1.0% from £584 million in 2007-08.

The NIC per head of population registered with a GP increased from £136.51 in 2000-01 to £189.73 (the highest) in 2004-05, and fell to £180.45 in 2017-18.

**Chart 3** shows the percentage of prescription items prescribed generically. Generic medicines become available once the original brand has come out of patent protection. In general, these are cheaper than 'brand' name versions, but are equally effective.

**Chart 3: Items prescribed generically (%), 2000-01 onwards**



Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

(a) See the [notes](#) section at the end of the release for the definition of 'prescribed generically'.

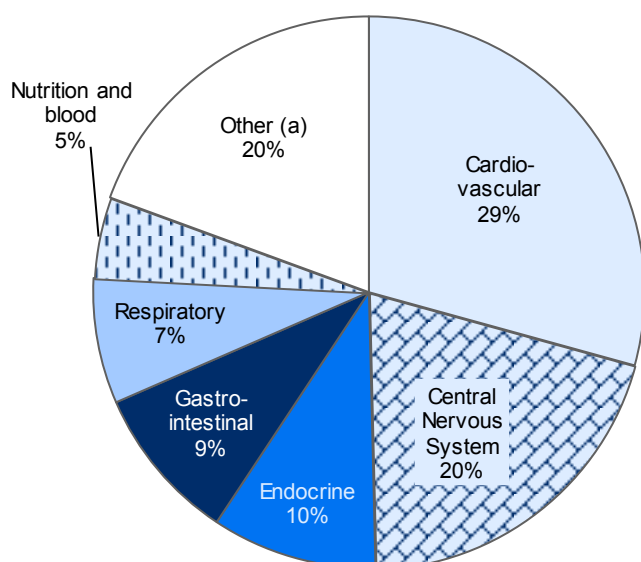
The percentage of items prescribed generically has risen from 66.7% in 2000-01 to more than 80% each year from 2006-07 onwards, though it has decreased slightly in the last three years.

## Therapeutic classes – 2017-18

**Chart 4** shows the proportion of items prescribed in Wales, while **Chart 5** shows the net ingredient cost (NIC) of prescription items in Wales, by the six largest therapeutic classes (by items) during 2017-18. A list of the [therapeutic classes](#) is included in the notes section of this release.

- Almost half of all **items** prescribed in Wales were for the treatment of conditions of the cardiovascular and central nervous systems.
- 23.4 million **items** prescribed were for treatment of the cardiovascular system; this equates to 7.3 items per head of population registered with a GP.
- 16.3 million **items** were prescribed for the treatment of the central nervous system, equal to 5.1 items per head of population registered with a GP.
- Although the number of **items** prescribed for treatment of the central nervous and cardiovascular systems accounted for half of the total items prescribed (see Chart 4), the **Net Ingredient Cost** for the same classes only accounted for 32% of the total (see Chart 5).

**Chart 4: Items by therapeutic class, 2017-18**

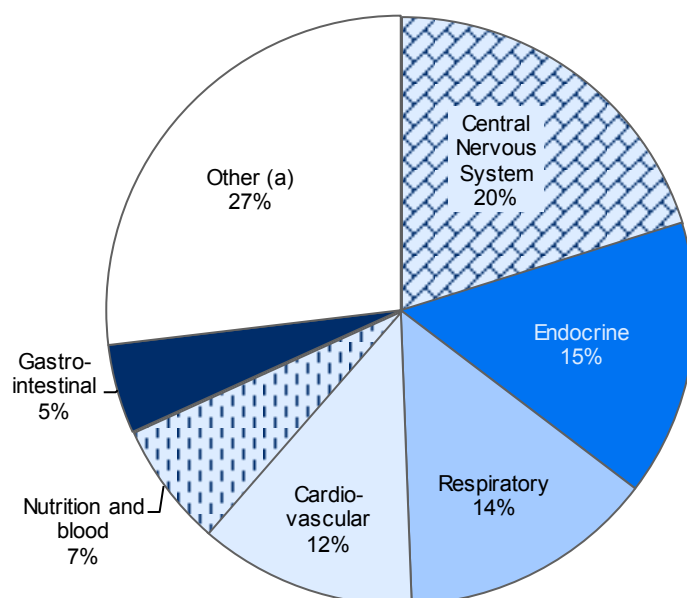


Source: NHS Wales shared Services Partnership

(a) 'Other' includes: skin, infections, musculoskeletal & joint, obstetrics, gynaecology & urinary tract, malignant disease & immunosuppression, ear, nose & oropharynx, eye, immunological products & vaccines, anaesthesia, other drugs & preparations, dressings, appliances, preparations used in diagnosis, incontinence appliances and stoma appliances.

It should be noted that the NIC in several classes included in 'other' (eg stoma appliances) is higher than the NIC of some of the classes shown; the same classes, based on highest number of items prescribed, are shown in both charts.

**Chart 5: NIC by therapeutic class, 2017-18**

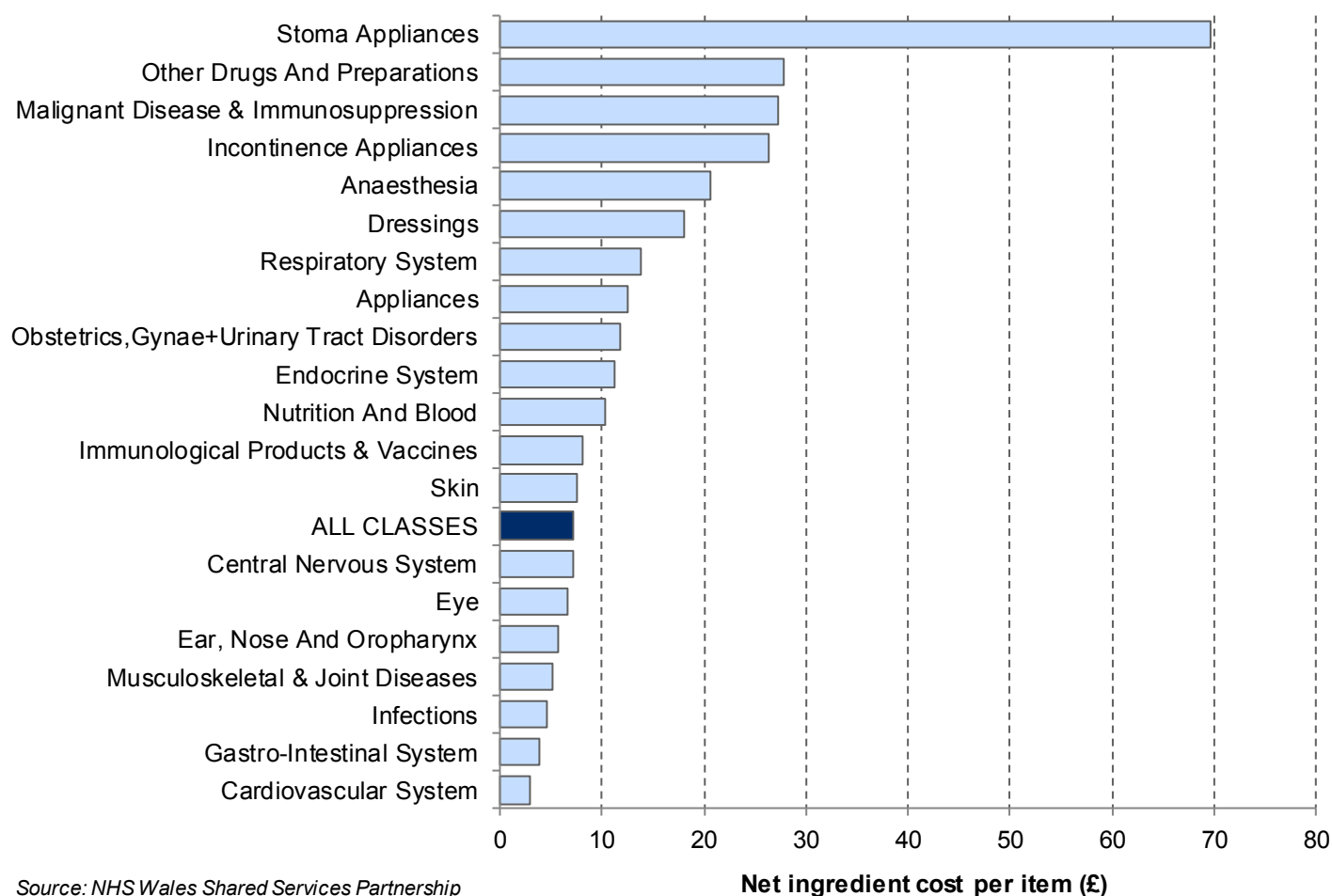


Source: NHS Wales shared Services Partnership

**Chart 6** shows the net ingredient cost (NIC) per item, of prescriptions dispensed in Wales during 2017-18, by therapeutic class (excluding 'preparations used in diagnosis' where only 1 item was prescribed).

- The net ingredient cost per item ranged from £2.97 in the cardiovascular system class to £69.61 for items in the stoma appliances class.
- For all therapeutic classes together, the net ingredient cost per item was £7.24, up from £7.21 in the previous year.

**Chart 6: Net ingredient cost per item, by therapeutic class 2017-18**



Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

**Note:** Only 1 item prescribed in the 'preparations used in diagnosis' class in 2017-18, so excluded from this chart.

(a) See the [Notes](#) for a list of therapeutic classes.

## Therapeutic classes - 10 year trend

**Charts 7-9** show the number of items prescribed, the costs<sup>1</sup> per head of population and the cost per prescription item, by the top ten therapeutic classes, in Wales in 2017-18 compared with 2007-08.

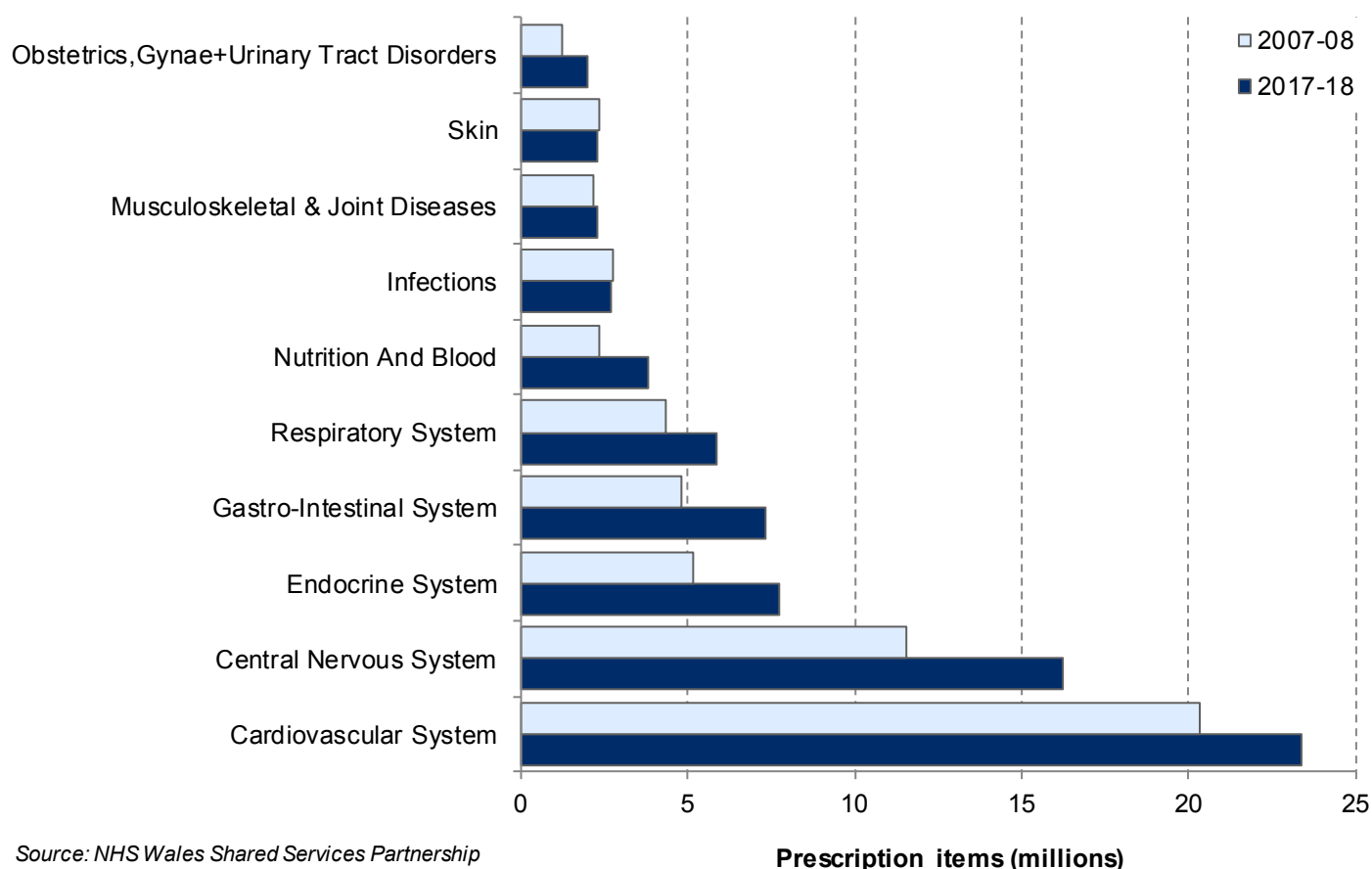
For context, these three charts should be read in conjunction with each other; while the total net ingredient cost has decreased by almost £6 million (1.0%) compared with 2007-08, almost 18 million more items were prescribed, an increase of 29%.

<sup>1</sup> Net ingredient cost – see [Notes](#) section at the end of the release.

### Items:

- 23.4 million items were prescribed to treat conditions or diseases of the cardiovascular system in Wales in 2017-18, an increase of 15% from the 20.3 million items dispensed in 2007-08. However, as a percentage of all items prescribed, cardiovascular items decreased to 29% in 2017-18, from 33% in 2007-08.
- 16.3 million items were prescribed to treat conditions or diseases of the central nervous system in Wales in 2017-18, an increase of 41% from the 11.5 million items in 2007-08.
- Of the ten most prescribed item groups, the largest percentage increase over the 10 years was in the nutrition and blood class, with 3.8 million items prescribed in 2017-18 compared with 2.3 million in 2007-08, an increase of 63%.
- Over the last 10 years, the number of items prescribed in all classes combined has increased by 29%, up from 62.0 million items in 2007-08 to 79.9 million in 2017-18.

**Chart 7: Prescription items by top ten therapeutic classes in 2017-18 compared with 2007-08**

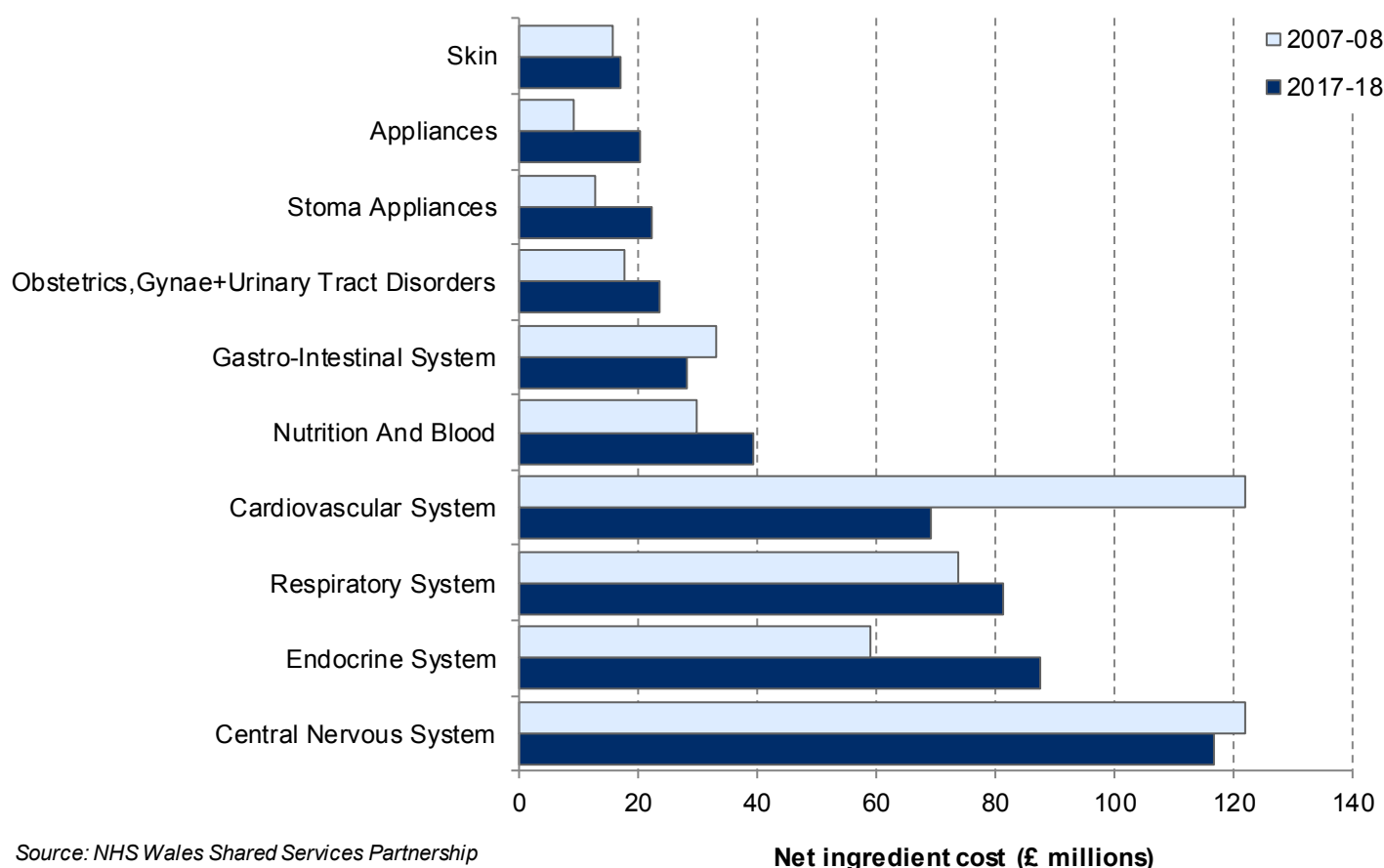


## Net ingredient cost (NIC):

- The therapeutic class with the largest total net ingredient cost was the central nervous system. The NIC for this class £116.8 million in 2017-18, which was a reduction of 4% from 2007-08 (£122.1 million).
- The total net ingredient cost of items prescribed in the second largest class (by cost), the endocrine system, which overtook respiratory as the second largest class (by cost) in 2015-16, was £87.7 million in 2017-18, up 48% from £59.1 million in 2007-08.
- The largest percentage increase in cost over the 10 years is in the appliances class, with an increase of 120% from £9.2 million in 2007-08 to £20.3 million in 2017-18.
- The total net ingredient cost of items in the cardiovascular system class has fallen by 43% over the last 10 years, from £122.0 million in 2007-08 to £69.4 million in 2017-18<sup>1</sup>.
- The total net ingredient cost of items in the gastro-intestinal system class has fallen by 14% over the last 10 years, from £33.1 million to £28.3 million.
- Over the last 10 years, the total net ingredient cost for all classes combined has decreased by 1.0%, down from £584.4 million in 2007-08 to £578.4 million in 2017-18.

<sup>1</sup> The net ingredient cost of a number of medicines in the cardiovascular class have decreased considerably in recent years. The decrease is related to changes in the price the NHS pays for a medicine when the relevant originator brand loses its patent protection and equivalent generic products, which generally have a lower acquisition cost, become available.

**Chart 8: Net ingredient cost by top ten therapeutic classes in 2017-18 compared with 2007-08**



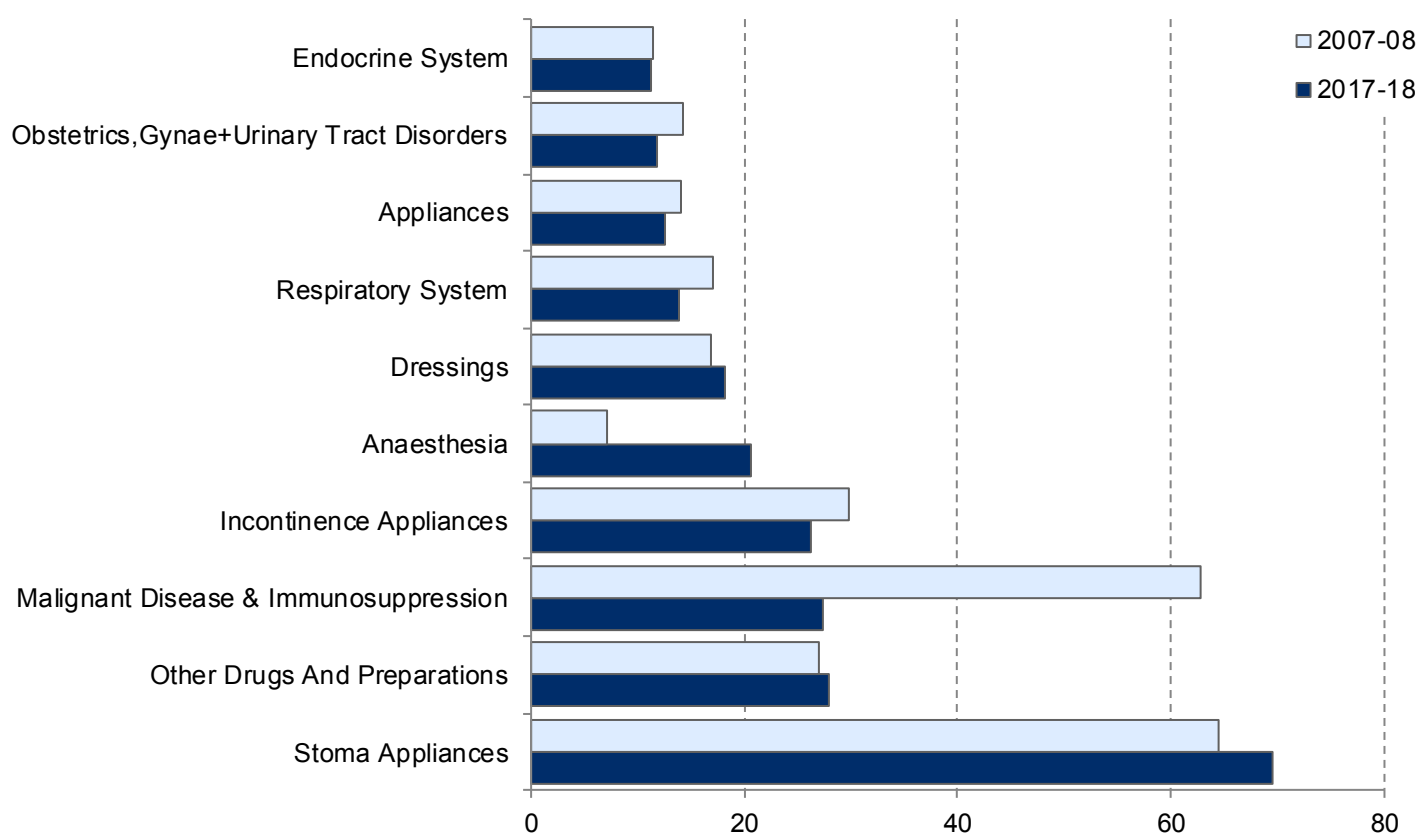
Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

See [StatsWales](#) for more detail

## Net ingredient cost (NIC) per prescription item:

- In 2017-18 the most expensive therapeutic class, in terms of cost per item, (but excluding 'preparations used in diagnosis' where only 1 prescription item was prescribed), was stoma appliances, at £69.61 per prescription item, up from £64.55 in 2007-08 (8%).
- The cost per item has fallen significantly in the 2 biggest classes by number of items prescribed; cardiovascular by 51%, from £6.01 in 2007-08 to £2.97 in 2017-18, and central nervous system by 32%, from £10.59 to £7.18
- The largest percentage reduction in cost per item can be seen in the malignant disease and immunosuppression class, down 57% from £62.73 in 2007-08 to £27.28 in 2017-18.
- While many of the classes show a reduction in cost per item compared with 10 years ago, a few have risen, in particular anaesthesia, up almost 200% from £7.10 to £20.65

**Chart 9: Net ingredient cost per prescription item by top ten therapeutic classes in 2017- 18 compared with 2007-08**



Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

**Net ingredient cost (£) per prescription item**

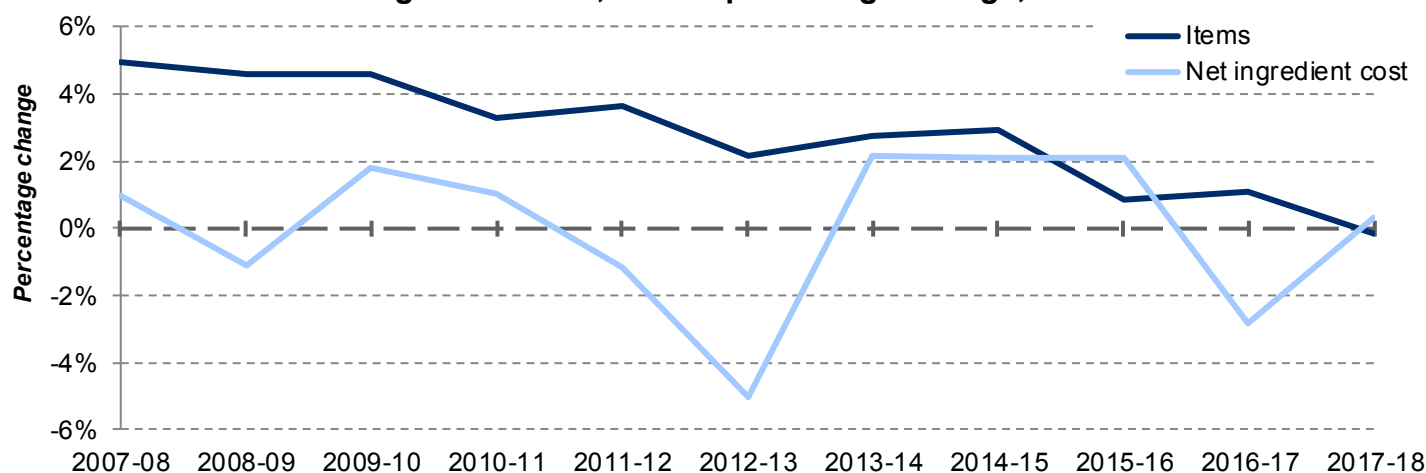
<sup>1</sup>Preparations used in diagnosis' have been excluded from this analysis as in most years very few or no items were prescribed.

See [StatsWales](#) for more detail

**Chart 10** shows the annual percentage change, over the last 10 years, of the total number of prescription items prescribed and the total net ingredient cost.

- Apart from in 2012-13 when the net ingredient cost fell by 5.1%, the annual percentage change has generally fluctuated around zero.
- The number of items prescribed and dispensed had increased year on year between 2007-08 and 2016-17, but by a gradually lower percentage. The downward pattern continued into 2017-18 where the number of items decreased by 0.2% since the previous year.

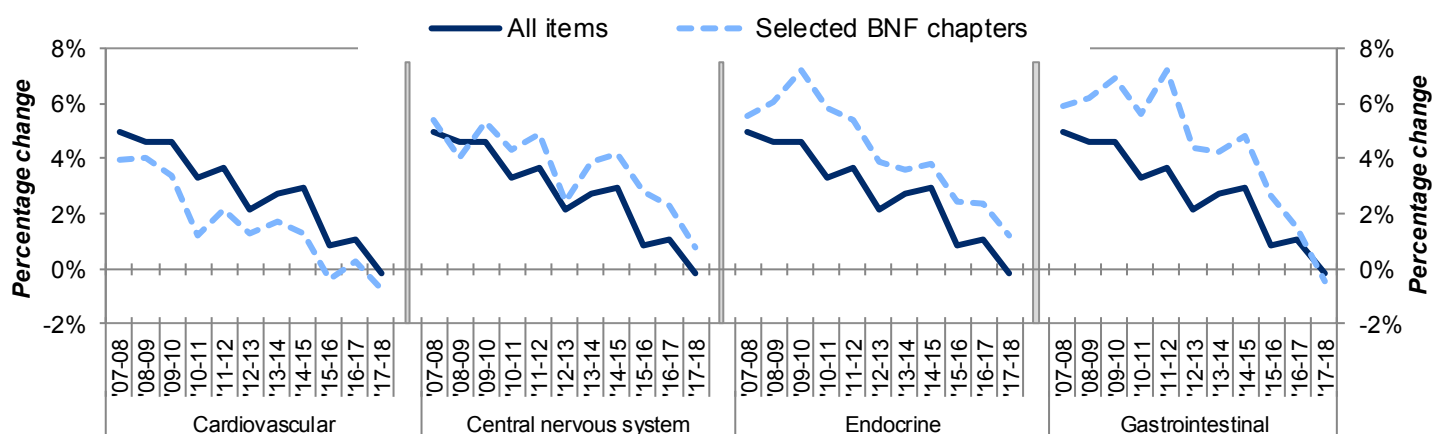
**Chart 10: Items and net ingredient cost, annual percentage change, 2007-08 to 2017-18**



Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

**Chart 11** shows the annual percentage change, over the last 10 years, of the number of items prescribed in the four largest classes, cardiovascular system, central nervous system, and endocrine system, plus all items.

**Chart 11: Annual percentage change of the number of items dispensed in the four largest classes (cardiovascular, central nervous, endocrine and gastrointestinal systems)**



Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

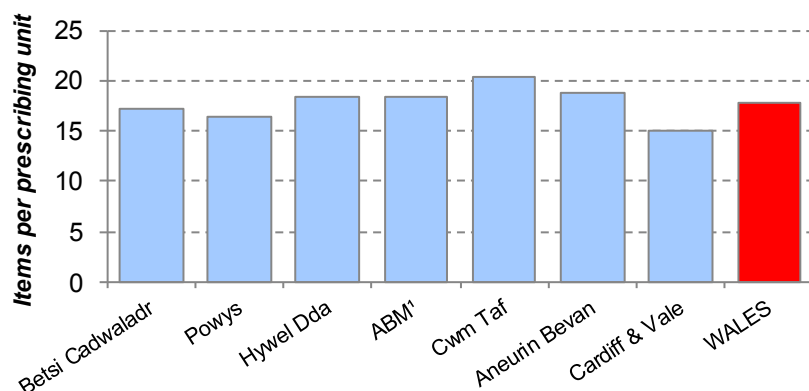
## Analysis by local health board

The following charts show the numbers of items prescribed by GPs contracted to Welsh Health Boards together with the associated NIC. Rather than comparing items per **head** of population registered with a GP, the charts show items and NIC per **Prescribing Unit**. [Prescribing units](#) (PUs) are calculated by giving a greater weight (by a factor of three) to the registered population aged 65 or over. They have been adopted here to take account of the greater need of elderly patients for medication and so to make more meaningful comparisons between health boards. The remaining differentials may be related to relative need and local culture and practice.

The 2017 mid-year estimates show that 21% of the population in Wales were aged 65 or over. This varied between health boards, with a relatively greater percentage of older people in Powys (27%), Hywel Dda (24%), and Betsi Cadwaladr (23%); and a relatively smaller percentage of older people in Abertawe Bro Morgannwg (20%), Aneurin Bevan (20%), Cwm Taf (19%) and Cardiff and Vale (16%).

**Chart 12** shows the number of items prescribed per prescribing unit (see information above) by local health board, in 2017-18.

**Chart 12: Number of prescription items per prescribing unit, by local health board, 2017-18**



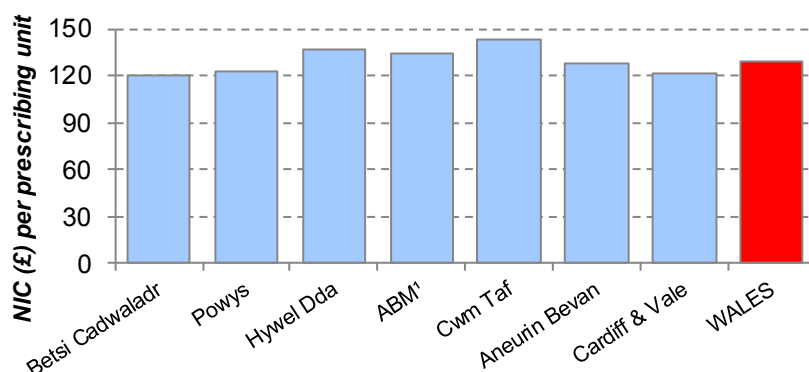
The number of items prescribed per prescribing unit in 2017-18 was 17.8 for Wales, and varied across the LHBs from 15.0 in Cardiff & Vale to 20.4 in Cwm Taf.

Sources: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership and GMS census

¹Abertawe Bro Morgannwg

**Chart 13** shows the net ingredient cost - see note (a) - of items prescribed by GPs in Wales, per prescribing unit, by local health board, in 2017-18.

**Chart 13: Net ingredient cost per prescribing unit, by local health board, 2017-18**



The net ingredient cost per prescribing unit in 2017-18 was £128.64 in Wales, and ranged from £120.54 in Betsi Cadwaladr to £143.40 in Cwm Taf.

GPs in Cardiff & Vale prescribed fewer items per prescribing unit than in other Health Boards but at a higher cost per item: £8.08 per item as compared to Cwm Taf, for example, which had the highest rates per prescribing unit for both items and cost but a lower cost per item (£7.04).

Sources: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership and GMS census

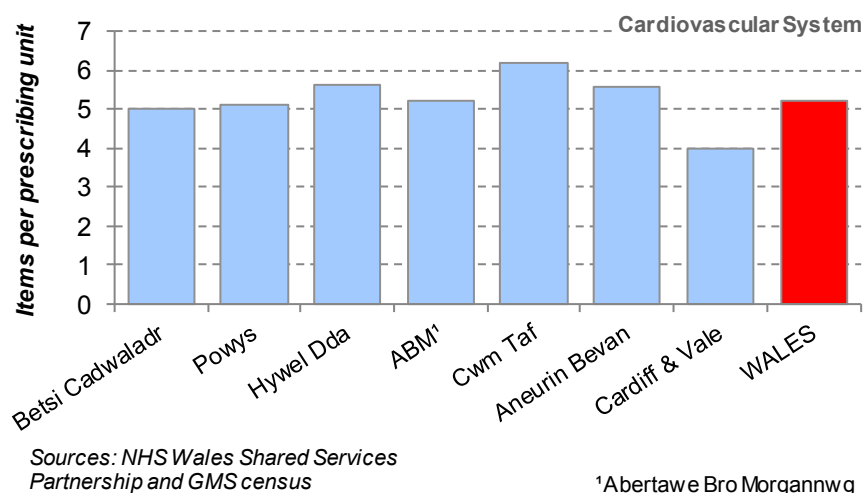
¹Abertawe Bro Morgannwg

(a) Refers to the cost (which the dispenser is reimbursed) of the drug before discounts and does not include any dispensing costs or fees.

**Charts 14a-e** Show the number of items prescribed per [prescribing unit](#) by local health board, in 2017-18 for the top 5 classes (by number of items prescribed) – cardiovascular system, central nervous system, endocrine system, gastro-intestinal system and respiratory system.

Cwm Taf has the highest prescribing rates for each of the classes shown below. The lowest rates were seen in Cardiff & Vale for the following classes: cardiovascular, endocrine, respiratory and gastro-intestinal; and Powys had the lowest rates for the central nervous system, once the rates are weighted to allow for the relatively older population.

**Chart 14a: Number of items per prescribing unit, cardiovascular system, 2017-18**

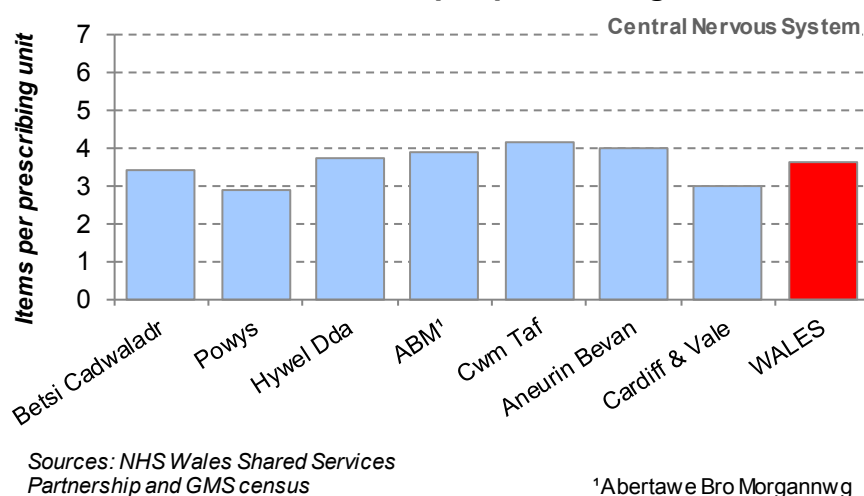


In Wales, the number of items prescribed - per prescribing unit – in the cardiovascular system class was 5.2.

Across the LHBs, this ranged from 4.0 in Cardiff & Vale to 6.2 in Cwm Taf.

[Prescribing units](#)

**Chart 14b: Number of items per prescribing unit, central nervous system, 2017-18**



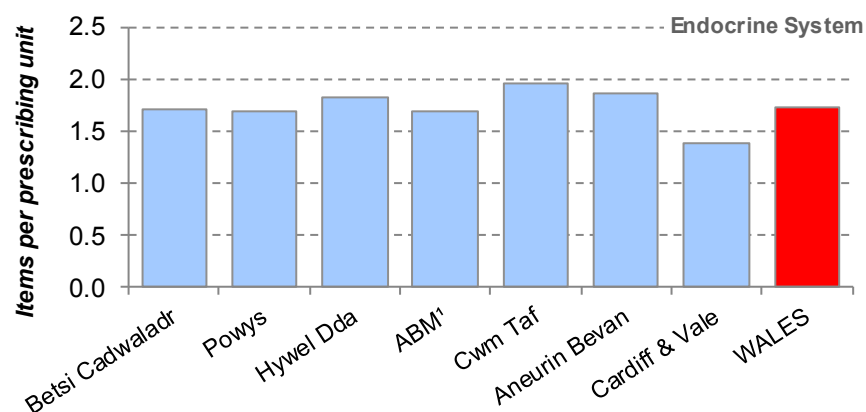
The number of items prescribed - per prescribing unit – in the central nervous system class was 3.6 for Wales as a whole.

Across the LHBs, this ranged from 2.9 in Powys to 4.2 in Cwm Taf.

[Prescribing units](#)

Note that the scale on the two charts on this page is not the same as the scale on Charts [14c](#), [14d](#) and [14e](#) on the following page.

**Chart 14c: Number of items per prescribing unit, endocrine system, 2017-18**



Sources: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership and GMS census

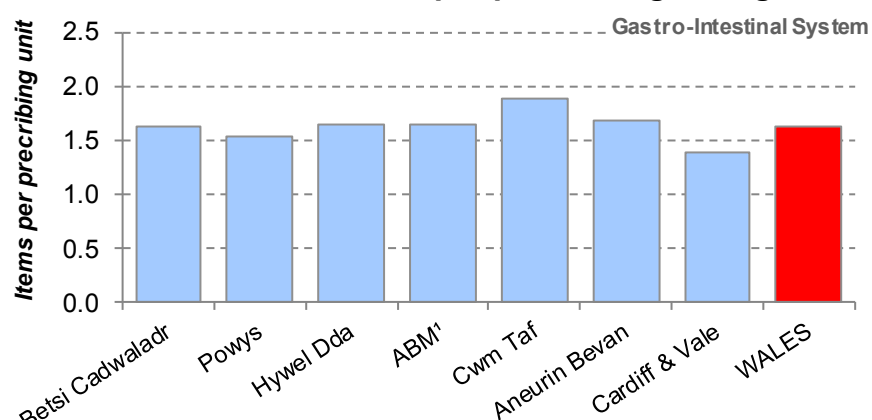
¹Abertawe Bro Morgannwg

In Wales, the number of items prescribed - per prescribing unit – in the endocrine system class was 1.7.

Across the LHBs, this varied from 1.4 in Cardiff & Vale to 2.0 in Cwm Taf.

[Prescribing units](#)

**Chart 14d: Number of items per prescribing unit, gastro-intestinal system, 2017-18**



Sources: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership and GMS census

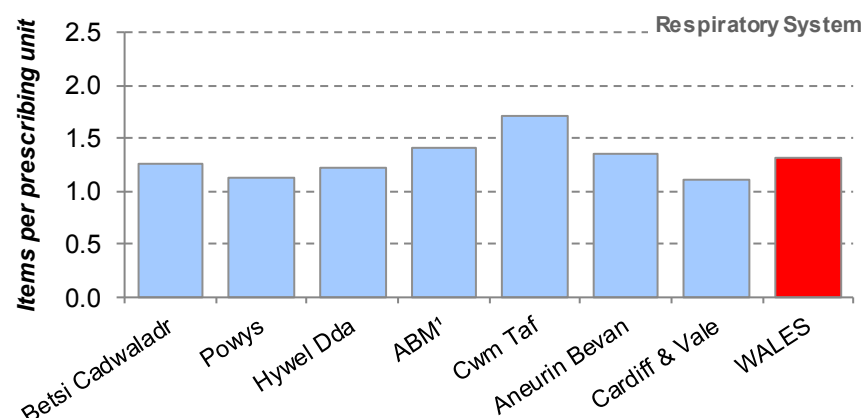
¹Abertawe Bro Morgannwg

The number of items prescribed - per prescribing unit – in the gastro-intestinal system class across Wales was 1.6.

Within the LHBs, this ranged from 1.4 in Cardiff & Vale to 1.9 in Cwm Taf.

[Prescribing units](#)

**Chart 14e: Number of items per prescribing unit, respiratory system, 2017-18**



Sources: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership and GMS census

¹Abertawe Bro Morgannwg

In Wales, the number of items prescribed - per prescribing unit – in the respiratory system class was 1.3.

Across the LHBs, this ranged from 1.1 in Cardiff & Vale to 1.7 in Cwm Taf.

[Prescribing units](#)

Note that the scale on the three charts on this page is not the same as the scale on Charts [14a](#) and [14b](#) on the previous page.

## Key quality information

### Quality report

We publish a detailed [quality report](#) on 'Prescriptions by GPs in Wales' statistics. The quality report includes information on definitions and coverage, and details of our users.

### Source

The data are obtained from Prescribing Services, NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership and are based on information obtained from prescriptions sent to Prescribing Services for payment.

Further data is available on the [Prescribing Services website](#); from April 2013, prescribing data by individual GP practices is also available via the [Prescribing Services website](#).

### Coverage

This release covers prescription items prescribed (and dispensed) or dispensed by GPs in Wales. Excluded from this release are prescriptions which were prescribed but, for a variety of reasons, have not been dispensed. It also covers prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered. Detailed data on all items dispensed in the community in Wales (including items not prescribed by GPs) are published in a separate Statistical Release together with comparisons of prescribing patterns in the four UK countries.

The statistics are based on the data provided by Prescribing Services following their payment processing. Prescribing Services, NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership have stated that due to the complex and manual processes involved there may be inaccuracies in capturing prescription information which are then reflected in the data. Internal quality assurance processes exist and currently the prescription processing activity is internally audited at around 99% accuracy (i.e. at least 99% of prescriptions are processed accurately).

## Definitions

### Items dispensed

A prescription item refers to a single item prescribed by a doctor on a prescription form. If a prescription form includes three items it is counted as three prescription items. A prescription item may be for a variable quantity eg 14, 28 or 56 tablets. A prescription item consists of a quantity of tablets or other preparation. This means that the cost per item does not equate to the cost, for example, per tablet or per pack of tablets but to the average number of packs prescribed per item.

### Net Ingredient Cost (NIC)

NIC refers to the cost of the drug before discounts and does not include any dispensing costs or fees. It does not include any adjustment where the patient has purchased a pre-payment certificate.

Figures quoted for net ingredient cost for all years are unadjusted for inflation. Standard adjustments for inflation are not considered appropriate as drug prices are subject to controls under the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme and to other central controls.

## Free prescriptions

Prescription charges were frozen on 1 April 2001 and gradually reduced each year until free prescriptions were introduced in Wales on 1 April 2007. Before 2007 prescriptions were free for those people under 25 or over 60, or who had certain medical conditions.

## Generic Prescribing

A prescription item prescribed generically refers to a prescription which has been written using the British Approved Name (BAN), International Non-proprietary Name (INN) or the scientific name of the active ingredient rather than the proprietary name. In general, generic items are cheaper than non-generic equivalents.

## Registered population

This is the number of people registered with a GP in Wales. In 2009 this was at 1 October, otherwise this is at 30 September. The source is the annual [GP Census](#).

## Prescribing units (PUs)

PUs are calculated by giving a greater weight (by a factor of three) to the population aged 65 or over (used as the denominator). They have been adopted here to take account of the greater need of elderly patients for medication and so to make more meaningful comparisons between Health Boards.

As an example for 2014-15:

Total prescription items: 78,512,726

Total population age 0-64, 2014 population registered with a GP: 2,555,500

Total population aged 65 or over: 617,494

PUs:  $4,407,982 (2,555,500 + (3 * 617,494))$

Items per PU: 17.81

## BNF

The British National Formulary (BNF) is a joint publication of the British Medical Association and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. It is published biannually under the authority of a Joint Formulary Committee which comprises representatives of the two professional bodies and of the UK Health Departments.

## Therapeutic classification

PCA data are based on the therapeutic grouping used in the British National Formulary. The classification in this report is based on the September 2017 BNF.

NHS Prescription Services have created pseudo-BNF chapters, for items that cannot be found in BNF chapters 1 to 15. The majority of these items are dressings and appliances, which NHS Prescription Services have classified into four pseudo-BNF chapters (20 to 23). However some gel and colloid dressings that are classified as drugs are included in a pseudo section within BNF 13 (13.13). NHS Prescription Services have produced a booklet on [BNF classifications](#) and the pseudo classifications used.

Examples of the conditions covered by each group (unless group is self-explanatory) are given below:

- **Gastro-intestinal system:** including preparations for the management of indigestion, diarrhoea, constipation, haemorrhoids, ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease
- **Cardiovascular system:** including preparations for the management of arrhythmia (irregular heart rhythm), hypertension (high blood pressure), heart failure and high cholesterol
- **Respiratory system:** including preparations for the management of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cystic fibrosis, allergies, cough and congestion
- **Central nervous system:** including preparations for the management of anxiety, sleeplessness, depression, pain, epilepsy, substance misuse, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease
- **Infections:** including preparations for the treatment of infection
- **Endocrine system:** including preparations for the management of diabetes, an under or over active thyroid gland and other hormonal conditions
- **Obstetrics (formerly obstetrics, gynaecology and urinary tract disorders):** including contraceptives and preparations used in obstetrics
- **Malignant disease and immunosuppression:** including preparations for the treatment and management of cancer and conditions affecting the immune system
- **Nutrition and blood:** vitamins, minerals and prescribed foods
- **Musculoskeletal and joint disorders:** including preparations for the management of rheumatoid arthritis and gout, myasthenia gravis, spasticity and topical treatments for pain
- **Eye:** including preparations for the treatment and management of eye infections and glaucoma
- **Ear, nose and oropharynx:** including preparations for the treatment and management of conditions affecting the ear, nose and throat
- **Skin:** including preparations for the treatment and management of eczema, psoriasis, acne, warts and verrucae
- **Immunological products and vaccines:** including preparations for the treatment of anaemia, vitamin preparations and supplements
- **Anaesthesia**
- **Preparations used in diagnosis**
- **Other drugs and preparations**
- **Dressings**
- **Appliances**
- **Incontinence supplies**
- **Stoma appliances**

A full list of the therapeutic classes (BNF chapters) and their sub groups are shown in the following table.

## Therapeutic class

### Gastro-intestinal System

- Antacids
- Antispasmodic and other drugs altering gut motility
- Ulcer healing drugs
- Antidiarrhoeal drugs
- Treatment of chronic diarrhoeas
- Laxatives
- Preparations for haemorrhoids
- Stoma care
- Drugs affecting intestinal secretions

### Cardiovascular System

- Positive inotropic drugs
- Diuretics
- Anti-arrhythmic drugs
- Beta-adrenoceptor blocking drugs
- Antihypertensive therapy
- Nitrates and other vasodilators, and calcium channel blockers
- Sympathomimetics
- Anticoagulants and protamine
- Antiplatelet drugs
- Antifibrinolytic drugs and haemostatics
- Lipid-lowering drugs
- Local sclerosants

### Respiratory System

- Bronchodilators
- Corticosteroids
- Cromoglycate and related therapy
- Allergic disorders
- Oxygen
- Mucolytics
- Aromatic inhalations
- Cough preparations
- Systemic nasal decongestants

### Central Nervous System

- Hypnotics and anxiolytics
- drugs used in psychoses and related disorders
- Antidepressant drugs
- Central nervous system stimulants
- Appetite suppressants
- Drugs used in nausea and vertigo
- Analgesics
- Antiepiletics
- Drugs used in parkinsonism and related disorders
- Drugs used in substance dependence
- Drugs used in Alzheimer's disease

### Infections

- Antibacterial drugs
- Antifungal drugs
- Antiviral drugs
- Antiprotozoal drugs
- Anthelmintics

### Endocrine System

- Drugs used in diabetes
- Thyroid and antithyroid drugs
- Corticosteroids
- Sex hormones
- Hypothalamic and pituitary hormones and antioestrogens
- Other endocrine drugs

### Obstetrics

- Drugs used in obstetrics
- Treatment of vaginal and vulval conditions
- Contraceptives
- Drugs used for genito-urinary disorders

### Malignant Disease and Immunosuppression

- Cytotoxic drugs
- Drugs affecting the immune response
- Sex hormones and hormone antagonists in malignant disease

### Nutrition and Blood

- Anaemias and other blood disorders
- Fluids and electrolytes
- Oral nutrition
- Minerals
- Vitamins
- Bitters and tonics
- Metabolic disorders
- Foods
- Compound vitamin / mineral formulations
- Health supplements
- Other health supplements

### Musculoskeletal and Joint Disorders

- Drugs used in rheumatic diseases and gout
- Drugs used in neuromuscular disorders
- Drugs used for relief of soft tissue inflammation

### Eye

- Anti-infective eye preparations
- Corticosteroids and other anti-inflammatory preparations
- Mydriatics and cycloplegics
- Treatment of glaucoma
- Local anaesthetics
- Miscellaneous ophthalmic preparations
- Contact lenses

### Ear, Nose and Oropharynx

- Drugs acting on the ear
- Drugs acting on the nose
- Drugs acting on the oropharynx

### Skin

- Vehicles and emulsifying agents
- Emollient and barrier preparations
- Local anaesthetics and antipruritics
- Topical corticosteroids
- Preparations for eczema and psoriasis
- Preparations for acne
- Preparations for warts and calluses
- Sunscreens and camouflagers
- Shampoos and some other scalp preparations
- Anti-infective skin preparations
- Disinfectants and cleansers
- Antiperspirants
- Wound management products
- Topical circulatory preparations
- Miscellaneous topical preparations

### Immunological Products and Vaccines

- Vaccines and antisera
- Immunoglobulins

### Anaesthesia

- General anaesthesia
- Local anaesthesia

### Preparations used in Diagnosis

- X-ray contrast media

### Other Drugs and Preparations

### Dressings

### Appliances

### Incontinence Supplies

### Stoma Appliances

NOTE: some preparations have multiple indications and may therefore be classified under more than one therapeutic class.

## Notes

### Pharmacy and Appliance Contractor Dispensing Data

Data on Pharmacy and Appliance Contractor Dispensing Data in Wales is available from [NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership, Primary Care Services](#).

### Data for other UK countries

Prescribing patterns for the four UK countries are presented in the annual '[Prescriptions dispensed in the community](#)' statistical release. Data for other UK countries can be accessed via the following webpages:

#### England

[Prescriptions Dispensed in the Community, Statistics for England](#)

[Prescription Cost Analysis - England](#)

#### Scotland

[Prescribing and Medicines](#)

#### Northern Ireland

[Pharmaceutical statistics](#)

Note that varying prescribing practice may affect the interpretation of UK country comparisons.

The figures supplied in this release cover items dispensed in Wales.

### Users and uses of these statistics:

We believe the key users of prescription statistics are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales
- policy makers of the Welsh Government
- other government departments
- National Health Service and Public Health Wales
- students, academics and universities
- General Medical Council and other professional organisations
- individual citizens and private companies.

The statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of the uses include:

- advice to Ministers
- to inform debate in the National Assembly for Wales and beyond.

## National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

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 UK Statistics 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.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Our statistics take into account our disclosure control guidance and follow ONS confidentiality guidelines for Health statistics available from [ONS best-practice guidelines](#).

### **Well-being of Future Generations Act:**

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

## Further details

This release is available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/prescriptions-general-medical-practitioners/?lang=en>

Further information on methods and quality can be found in the [Quality Report](#).

## Next update

The next release covering 2018-19 will be published in September 2019.

## We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics, which can be provided by email to [stats.healthinfo@gov.wales](mailto:stats.healthinfo@gov.wales)

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