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Investment in General Practice, Northern Ireland 2019-20 to 2023-24



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

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Investment in General Practice, Northern Ireland 2019-20 to 2023-24

Publication Date: 4 October 2024

Introduction:

This report details the investment in general practice and the reimbursement for drugs dispensed in general practices in Northern Ireland from 2019-20 to 2023-24. The report draws on information from the financial reporting system of the Strategic Planning & Performance Group (SPPG)¹ of the Department of Health (DoH) and other published data on reimbursement and remuneration for dispensing activity derived from the Family Practitioner Services Pharmacy Payments System maintained by the Business Services Organisation (BSO).

The data also contain some financial flows which do not reach GP Practices but contribute towards overall General Medical Services (GMS) investment. These include payments for Information Management and Technology (IM&T) and out-of-hours services.

The figures include expenditure relating to dispensing by GP practices, but not the costs of drugs dispensed by high street pharmacies. The total cost of all prescriptions dispensed in the community by community pharmacists, appliance contractors and dispensing doctors, can be found in the Prescription Cost Analysis produced by the Business Services Organisation (BSO). This can be found on the [BSO's website](#).

Discontinued NHS Digital² Publication:

Previously country level information from all 4 UK countries was discussed by the Technical Steering Committee (TSC), which is chaired by NHS Digital and has representation from the Department of Health and Social Care, UK Health Departments, NHS England and NHS Improvement, NHS Employers and the British Medical Association (BMA). From 2003-04, NHS Digital provided a rolling five-year time series of Investment in General Practice for each UK country. As well as providing UK-level figures, the report was intended to facilitate comparison of spending across the countries.

However, changes to general practice contractual arrangements in each country over recent years mean the payment categories and spending practices are no longer comparable. As a result, the Technical Steering Committee, which oversaw this series, decided that this UK-level report was no longer relevant or appropriate and have discontinued the series. This can be found at: <http://www.digital.nhs.uk>

From 2020, each country agreed to produce and publish its own report, with NHS Digital providing links to these reports once released. It is important to note that figures between these individual country reports will not be comparable due to the differing contractual arrangements which have led to the UK-level report being discontinued.

¹ The Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) officially closed on 31 March 2022; responsibility for its functions transferred to the Strategic Planning & Performance Group (SPPG), within the Department of Health (DoH).

² NHS Digital legally merged with NHS England on 1st February 2023. All references to NHS Digital now, or in the future, relate to NHS England. NHS England has assumed responsibility for all activities previously undertaken by NHS Digital.

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Key Facts:

In 2023-24, the total investment in general practice, including the reimbursement of drugs dispensed in general practice, was £388.248m. Compared to 2022-23, this represents an increase in the total investment in GP practices of 3.60 per cent in Northern Ireland. In real terms this equates to a decrease of 2.48 per cent. General practice played a key role in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020/21 and 2021/22. This is reflected in higher levels of investment during that period.

In 2023-24, in response to the recommendation in the report of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB), a 6.0% uplift was applied for GP pay. In addition, 6% uplift for practice staff expenses and a 7.3% uplift for other expenses (3% recurrent) were also applied. This represents an investment of £16.624m (of which £2.182m is non-recurrent).

Data Quality:

Assessment of the quality of the statistics and the data sources is provided in a separate document available on the publication page at:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/investment-general-practice>

Further Information:

Details of other publications of interest can be found at the end of this report.

For further information, contact:

Information & Analysis Directorate,
Department of Health,
Annexe 2, Castle Buildings,
Stormont Estate,
Belfast,
BT4 3SQ

Responsible Statistician: Penny Murray**Telephone:** 028 9052 2700**E-mail:** gofdataenquiries@health-ni.gov.uk**Feedback:** We welcome feedback on any aspects of these statistics. This can be provided at the e-mail address above.

NISRA ran a consultation on proposed changes to some of their statistical outputs, which ended on 15 October 2023. The full report on the outcome of the consultation can be found at: [outputs consultation results](#)

Table 1: Investment in General Practice in Northern Ireland 2019-20 to 2023-24 (excluding reimbursement of drugs)

£ Millions

| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 [#] | 2021-22 [#] | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|------------|----------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Cash Terms | £322.268 | £363.682 | £374.244 | £370.819 | £384.084 |
| % Change | : | 12.85% | 2.90% | -0.92% | 3.58% |
| Real Terms | £382.157 | £408.995 | £424.350 | £393.928 | £384.084 |
| % Change | : | 7.02% | 3.75% | -7.17% | -2.50% |

Source: Financial Information Monitoring Returns (HSCB/SPPG); year ended March 2020 to 2024

Family Practitioner Services Pharmacy Payments System, BSO

[#] Funding in relation to the covid 19 response commenced in 2020-21 and remained for 2021-22, stabilising in 2021-22; this funding is reported under Local Enhanced Services.

Note: Further information on how the Real Terms figures have been calculated using the GDP deflator can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gross-domestic-product-gdp-deflators-user-guide>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp-june-2024-quarterly-national-accounts>

Real terms figures have been based on unrounded figures.

Table 2: Total Investment in General Practice in Northern Ireland 2019-20 to 2023-24

£ Millions

| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 [#] | 2021-22 [#] | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|------------|----------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Cash Terms | £326.507 | £367.416 | £377.874 | £374.775 | £388.248 |
| % Change | : | 12.53% | 2.85% | -0.82% | 3.60% |
| Real Terms | £387.184 | £413.195 | £428.466 | £398.130 | £388.248 |
| % Change | : | 6.72% | 3.70% | -7.08% | -2.48% |

Source: Financial Information Monitoring Returns (HSCB/SPPG); year ended March 2020 to 2024

Family Practitioner Services Pharmacy Payments System, BSO

[#] Funding in relation to the covid 19 response commenced in 2020-21 and remained for 2021-22, stabilising in 2021-22; this funding is reported under Local Enhanced Services.

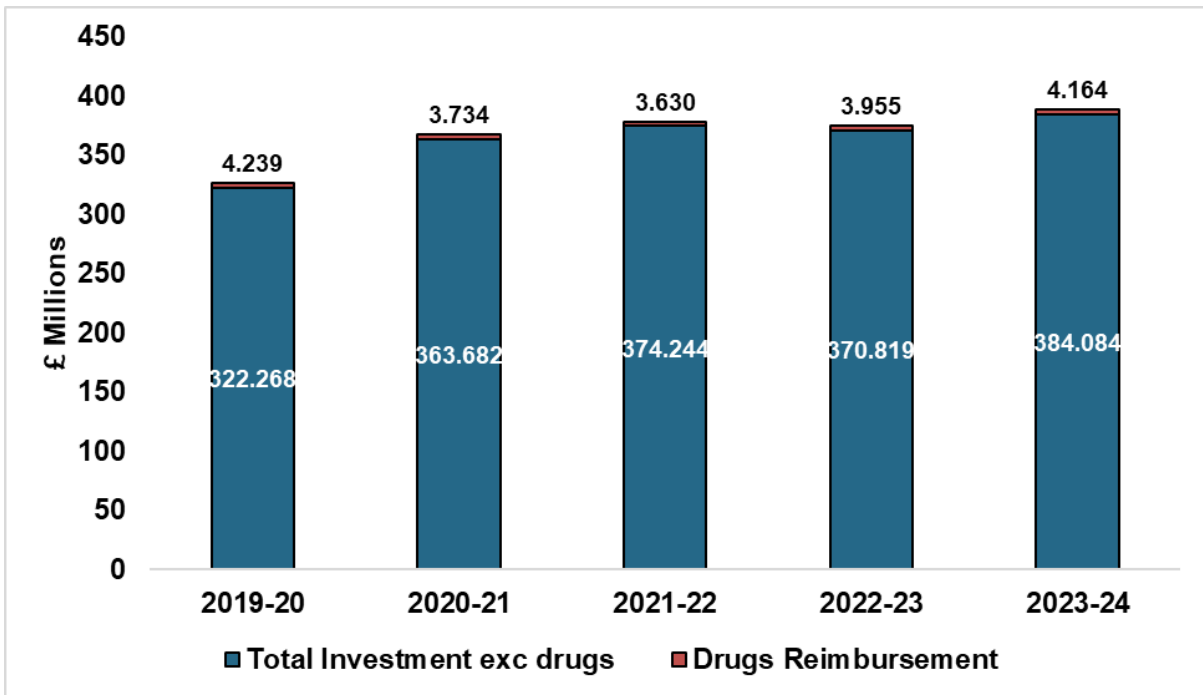
Note: Further information on how the Real Terms figures have been calculated using the GDP deflator can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gross-domestic-product-gdp-deflators-user-guide>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp-june-2024-quarterly-national-accounts>

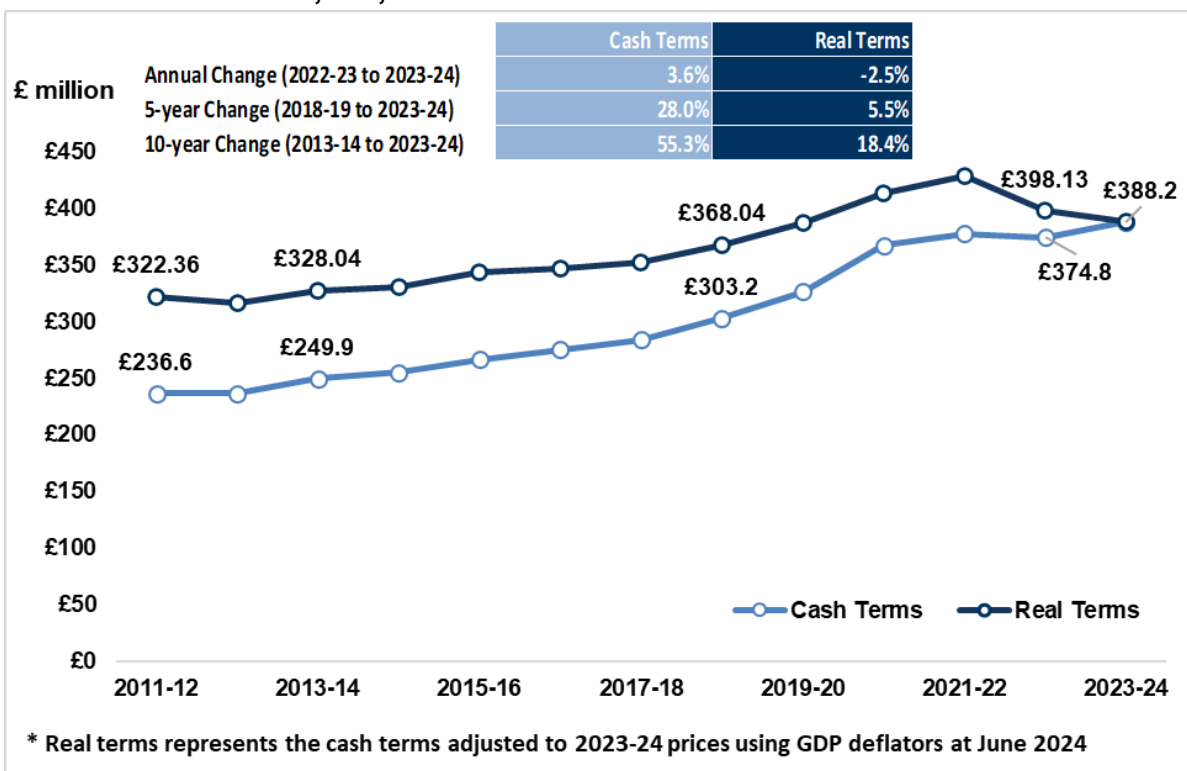
Real terms figures have been based on unrounded figures.

**Figure 1: Investment in General Practice in Northern Ireland, 2019-20 to 2023-24
£ millions**



Source: Financial Information Monitoring Returns (HSCB/SPPG); year ended March 2020 to 2024
Family Practitioner Services Pharmacy Payments System, BSO

Figure 2: Investment in General Practice in NI - Total Investment, 2011-12 to 2023-24, £m, Cash and Real Terms*



Source: Financial Information Monitoring Returns (HSCB/SPPG); year ended March 2012 to 2024; Family Practitioner Services Pharmacy Payments System, BSO

Table 3a: 5-Year Trend Summary Table

£ thousands

| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Global Sum | 162,949 | 168,867 | 177,206 | 187,056 | 197,278 |
| Minimum Practice Income Guarantee (MPIG) Correction Factor | 6,990 | 7,505 | 7,875 | 8,334 | 8,920 |
| Global Sum/MPIG | 169,940 | 176,372 | 185,081 | 195,390 | 206,198 |
| Quality Aspiration Payments | 21,609 | 22,005 | 21,913 | 21,874 | 21,423 |
| Quality Achievement Payments | 9,405 | 9,640 | 9,692 | 9,695 | 9,660 |
| Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF)¹ | 31,014 | 31,645 | 31,605 | 31,569 | 31,083 |
| Direct Enhanced Services ² | 13,433 | 14,814 | 13,162 | 14,371 | 11,893 |
| Local Enhanced Services ³ | 11,155 | 37,148 | 34,202 | 20,771 | 18,601 |
| Regional Enhanced Services (including Clinical Priorities) | 29,590 | 35,749 | 41,093 | 40,147 | 42,533 |
| Total Enhanced Services⁴ | 54,178 | 87,712 | 88,457 | 75,289 | 73,027 |
| Premises | 18,871 | 18,370 | 22,720 | 18,394 | 18,249 |
| Primary Care Organisation (PCO) Administered Funds/Other GMS Services ^{2,5} | 16,609 | 18,503 | 15,040 | 16,789 | 22,004 |
| Out of Hours (including OOH Development Fund) | 26,388 | 25,928 | 26,205 | 27,762 | 27,579 |
| IM and IT | 5,125 | 5,020 | 4,995 | 5,482 | 5,800 |
| Total Other Payments | 66,992 | 67,821 | 68,960 | 68,427 | 73,631 |
| Total Net of Dispensing | 322,124 | 363,550 | 374,104 | 370,676 | 383,939 |
| Cost of Dispensing Fees ⁶ | 144 | 132 | 140 | 144 | 145 |
| Total Investment Excluding Reimbursement of Drugs⁷ | 322,268 | 363,682 | 374,244 | 370,819 | 384,084 |
| Reimbursement of Dispensed Drugs ⁸ | 4,239 | 3,734 | 3,630 | 3,955 | 4,164 |
| Total Spend⁹ | 326,507 | 367,416 | 377,874 | 374,775 | 388,248 |

Source: Financial Information Monitoring Returns (HSCB/SPPG); year ended March 2020 to 2024; Family Practitioner Services Pharmacy Payments System, BSO

1. As a means of stabilising GMS, the DoH and NI General Practitioners' Committee (GPC) agreed that the QOF would be suspended for payment purposes for the 2023/24 year, with no financial detriment to General Practices. Whilst not required to record QOF activity for payment purposes, practices were required to continue to deliver care to these patients as clinically appropriate.
2. See Table 3b for detailed breakdown of these funding lines.
3. 2020-21 and 2021-22 include funding in relation to Covid 19 response.
4. There are no National Enhanced Services in place in Northern Ireland.
5. Dispensing element of PCO administered funds reported on separate line.
6. This figure refers only to the cost of dispensing fees for items dispensed and/or personally administered by dispensing doctors.
7. This total includes the cost of dispensing fees but not reimbursement of the cost of drugs.
8. This total includes Net Ingredient Cost (NIC), vat allowance and discounts and stock order costs (NIC) for both dispensing doctors and non-dispensing doctors.
9. Figures may not sum to total due to rounding.

Table 3b: Supplementary Information 2023-24

£ thousands

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Direct Enhanced Services | |
| Childhood Vaccination and Immunisation Scheme | 3,954 |
| Influenza and Pneumococcal Immunisations Scheme | 4,439 |
| Learning Disabilities | 815 |
| MEN ACWY | 11 |
| Minor Surgery | 2,108 |
| Services for Violent Patients | 230 |
| Shingles Vaccinations | 335 |
| Total Direct Enhanced Services¹ | 11,893 |
| | |
| PCO Administered Funds/Other Services | |
| Seniority | 5,722 |
| Doctors Retainer Scheme Payments/NI GP Development Scheme | 0 |
| Locum Allowances consisting of: | |
| a) Adoptive, paternity and maternity | 1,463 |
| b) Sickness | 949 |
| c) Suspended Doctors | 0 |
| d) Other Locum payments | 0 |
| Appraiser Costs of Sessional GPs | 147 |
| Practice Training | 229 |
| Interpreting | 139 |
| Treatment Room Nursing | 3,590 |
| GP Locum Superannuation | 1,458 |
| GP Consumables reimbursement scheme | 1,073 |
| GP Federation Infrastructure Costs | 0 |
| Medical Equipment and Data Storage | 1 |
| Miscellaneous | 7,233 |
| Total PCO Administered Funds/Other Services¹ | 22,004 |

**Source: Financial Information Monitoring Returns (HSCB/SPPG);
year ended March 2024**

1. Figures may not sum to total due to rounding.

Other Publications:

Investment in General Practice in England, 2017/18 to 2021/22

Current Link: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/investment-in-general-practice-in-england-17-18-to-21-22/>

Summary: This report details the investment in General Practice and the reimbursement for drugs dispensed in General Practices in England from 2017/18 to 2021/22. The report draws on information from the financial reporting systems of NHS England and Improvement and other published data on reimbursement and remuneration for dispensing activity. This information has been discussed with the General Practitioners Committee (GPC) of the British Medical Association (BMA), which represents the interests of GPs.

Previous Versions: Previous versions can be found at:
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/investment-in-general-practice-in-england-2016-17-to-2020-21/>
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/investment-in-general-practice-in-england-2015-16-to-2019-20/>

Investment in General Practice in Wales, 2018/19 to 2022/23

Current Link: <https://www.gov.wales/investment-general-practice-2018-2019-financial-year-2022-2023-financial-year-html>

Summary: This report details the investment in General Practice and the reimbursement for drugs dispensed in General Practices in Wales from 2018/19 to 2022/23.

Previous Versions: Previous versions can be found at:
<https://www.gov.wales/investment-general-practice-wales-2016-2017-financial-year-2020-2021-financial-year-html>

Previously NHS Digital published country level information for all 4 UK countries; .

Investment in General Practice 2014/15 to 2018/19; England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland

Current Link: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/investment-in-general-practice/2014-15-to-2018-19-england-wales-northern-ireland-and-scotland>

Summary: This report details the investment in General Practice and the reimbursement for drugs dispensed in General Practices from 2014/15

to 2018/19. The report draws on information from country level financial monitoring reports discussed by the Technical Steering Committee (TSC). This series has been discontinued.

Previous Versions: <http://www.digital.nhs.uk>

2022-23 GP Earnings and Expenses Report

Current Link: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/gp-earnings-and-expenses-estimates/2022-23>

Summary: This report presents results from the GP Earnings and Expenses Enquiry for the financial year 2022-23.

Previous Versions: <http://www.digital.nhs.uk>

The Quality and Outcomes Framework 2022-23 for Northern Ireland

Current Link: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/quality-and-outcomes-framework-gof-statistics-annual-report>

Summary: This statistical publication presents a summary of data (achievement and exceptions data) from the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF). The QOF was first implemented in general practices in April 2004. Information is derived from the General Practice Intelligence Platform (GPIP)-QOF System (GPIP-QOF), a NI system that uses data from NI general practices to calculate QOF achievement for individual practices.

Previous Versions: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/quality-and-outcomes-framework-gof-achievement-exception-reporting-statistics-201516-202122>

Disease Prevalence Data for Northern Ireland

Current Link: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/prevalence-statistics>

Summary: This bulletin presents raw disease prevalence data at GP Federation, LCG and Northern Ireland levels. Time series data is presented for Northern Ireland, with LCG and GP federation data given for the current year, for each of the 14 registers which count patients with specific conditions or diseases as covered by the Quality and Outcomes Framework. A comprehensive excel spreadsheet, which also includes GP practice level data, and an interactive tool accompany the bulletin.

Previous Versions: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/200405-202122-raw-disease-prevalence-data-northern-ireland>

General Medical Services Statistics

Current Link: <https://bso.hscni.net/directorates/operations/family-practitioner-services/directorates-operations-family-practitioner-services-information-unit/1776-2/>

Summary: The Family Practitioner Services (FPS) Information Unit of the Business Services Organisation (BSO) produces information on General Practitioners, GP practices and registered patients including registration activity and payments.

Previous Versions: <https://bso.hscni.net/directorates/operations/family-practitioner-services/directorates-operations-family-practitioner-services-information-unit/1776-2/previous-general-medical-services-publications/>