

Date 19/05/2025
Your Ref
Our Ref 10003

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
Extension 35687
Direct Line 0131 465 5687
loth.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot
richard.mutch@nhs.scot

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION - PARACETAMOL AND IBUPROFEN

I write in response to your request for information in relation to paracetamol and ibuprofen prescribing.

Question:

1. The total number of individual patients to whom paracetamol and ibuprofen were prescribed by your Trust annually.

Answer:

This cannot be answered due to the unavailability of identifiable patient data.

Question:

2. The total amount spent by your Trust on supplying prescribed paracetamol and Ibuprofen in each of those financial years.

Answer:

Medication	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Ibuprofen	£114,559.99	£117,444.72	£71,204.38
Paracetamol	£238,587.07	£278,213.98	£379,873.66

Question:

3. If available, a breakdown of the form in which paracetamol was prescribed (e.g., tablets, capsules, liquid suspension, etc.) and associated costs for each form.

Answer:

Medication	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Ibuprofen			
Gel	£10,658.74	£11,136.02	£9,726.44
Intravenous Injection	£1,036.80	£345.60	£0.00
Oral Sugar Free Suspension	£46,478.36	£31,253.38	£13,854.25

Headquarters
Mainpoint
102 West Port
Edinburgh EH3 9DN

Chair Professor John Connaghan CBE
Chief Executive Professor Caroline Hiscox
Lothian NHS Board is the common name of Lothian Health Board

Oral Suspension	£20.47	£2,098.36	£337.78
Orodispersible Tablets	£146.34	£133.15	£170.33
Tablets	£56,219.28	£72,478.22	£47,115.58
Paracetamol			
Caplets	£108,193.95	£124,152.42	£125,057.34
Capsules	£368.91	£57.21	£47.90
Intravenous Infusion	£26,975.85	£26,094.98	£27,919.13
Oral Sugar Free Suspension	£80,707.63	£108,897.77	£210,924.16
Soluble Tablets	£6,948.32	£4,758.76	£5,674.63
Suppositories	£15,392.27	£14,252.85	£10,250.05
Tablets	£0.14	£0.00	£0.45

Question:

4. What are the specific conditions which qualify a patient to be prescribed paracetamol or ibuprofen? Or what is your general policy for qualifying a prescription for paracetamol or ibuprofen?

Answer:

Please see attached information compiled by the Medicines Management Team.

I hope the information provided helps with your request. I am sorry I cannot help with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal. If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner's response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian's Freedom of Information website at: <https://org.nhsllothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
Executive Director, Nursing
Cc: Chief Executive
Enc.

- **Bullet point 4 - What are the specific conditions which qualify a patient to be prescribed paracetamol or ibuprofen? Or what is your general policy for qualifying a prescription for paracetamol or ibuprofen?**

The following information details the formulary approved uses of ibuprofen and paracetamol in the East Region Formulary which is the official formulary used in NHS Lothian since 2022.

Ibuprofen – indications on East Region Formulary within treatment pathways

Group (Adult/Child/Pharmacy First)	Pathway/Indication	Link
Adult	Migraine : Treatment of an acute attack – mild to moderate migraine	Migraine : Treatment of an acute attack – mild to moderate migraine
Adult	Dysmenorrhoea : Treatment of dysmenorrhoea	Dysmenorrhoea : Treatment of dysmenorrhoea
Adult	Musculoskeletal pain : Treatment of musculoskeletal pain	Musculoskeletal pain : Treatment of musculoskeletal pain
Adult	Rheumatoid Arthritis : Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis with a NSAID	Rheumatoid Arthritis : Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis with a NSAID
Adult	Osteoarthritis : Treatment of Osteoarthritis with an oral NSAID	Osteoarthritis : Treatment of Osteoarthritis with an oral NSAID
Adult	Axial Spondyloarthritis : Treatment of Axial Spondyloarthritis with NSAIDs	Axial Spondyloarthritis : Treatment of Axial Spondyloarthritis with NSAIDs
Adult	Gout : Treatment of acute Gout	Gout : Treatment of acute Gout
Adult	Menorrhagia : Treatment of menorrhagia	Menorrhagia : Treatment of menorrhagia
Adult	Osteoarthritis : Treatment of Osteoarthritis with a topical preparation	Osteoarthritis : Treatment of Osteoarthritis with a topical preparation
Adult	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids
Adult	Pain : Analgesic treatment for peri-operative use only	Pain : Analgesic treatment for peri-operative use only
Adult	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids
Adult	Corneal abrasions : Treatment of corneal abrasions	Corneal abrasions : Treatment of corneal abrasions
Adult	Pain : Pain relief in pregnancy	Pain : Pain relief in pregnancy
Adult	Herpes zoster (shingles) : Treatment of herpes zoster	Herpes zoster (shingles) : Treatment of herpes zoster
Adult	Contraception : LARC – copper intrauterine device	Contraception : LARC – copper intrauterine device
Adult	Prostatitis : Treatment of acute prostatitis	Prostatitis : Treatment of acute prostatitis
Adult	Migraine : Treatment of an acute attack – moderate to severe migraine	Migraine : Treatment of an acute attack – moderate to severe migraine

Child	Musculoskeletal pain : Treatment of pain and inflammation in rheumatic disease	Musculoskeletal pain : Treatment of pain and inflammation in rheumatic disease
Child	Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) : Treatment of JIA with NSAIDs	Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) : Treatment of JIA with NSAIDs
Child	Migraine : Treatment of an acute migraine attack – step two	Migraine : Treatment of an acute migraine attack – step two
Child	Migraine : Treatment of an acute migraine attack – step one	Migraine : Treatment of an acute migraine attack – step one
Child	Migraine : Treatment of an acute abdominal migraine attack – step one	Migraine : Treatment of an acute abdominal migraine attack – step one
Child	Patent ductus arteriosus : Closure of the ductus arteriosus	Patent ductus arteriosus : Closure of the ductus arteriosus
Child	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids
Child	Pain : Analgesic treatment for peri-operative use only	Pain : Analgesic treatment for peri-operative use only
Child	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids
Child	Corneal abrasions : Treatment of corneal abrasions	Corneal abrasions : Treatment of corneal abrasions
Child	Pain : Chronic pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids	Pain : Chronic pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids
Child	Pain : Acute pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids	Pain : Acute pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids
Child	Ibuprofen or other NSAIDs and COVID-19	Ibuprofen or other NSAIDs and COVID-19
Child	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with medium potency opioids	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with medium potency opioids
Pharmacy First	Musculoskeletal pain : Pharmacy First - Musculoskeletal and joint pain	Musculoskeletal pain : Pharmacy First - Musculoskeletal and joint pain
Pharmacy First	Pain : Pharmacy First - Analgesics and antipyretics	Pain : Pharmacy First - Analgesics and antipyretics
Pharmacy First	Urinary tract infection (UTI) : Pharmacy First - Cystitis	Urinary tract infection (UTI) : Pharmacy First - Cystitis
Pharmacy First	Oral ulceration : Pharmacy First - Oral ulceration and inflammation	Oral ulceration : Pharmacy First - Oral ulceration and inflammation
Pharmacy First	Herpes zoster (shingles) : Pharmacy First - Shingles	Herpes zoster (shingles) : Pharmacy First - Shingles

Ibuprofen – indications on East Region Formulary within formulary decisions

Drug	Indication	Decision Date	SMC ref	Formulary Committee Decision	Additional comments on formulary
Ibuprofen	Haemodynamically significant patent ductus arteriosus in pre-term newborn infants of less than 34 weeks gestational age	31/09/2006	SMC (233/06)	Routinely available in line with national guidance	Link to formulary decision

Paracetamol – indications on East Region Formulary within treatment pathway

Group (Adult/Child/Pharmacy First)	Pathway/Indication	Link
Adult	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids
Adult	Pain : Pain relief in pregnancy	Pain : Pain relief in pregnancy
Adult	Dysmenorrhoea : Treatment of dysmenorrhoea	Dysmenorrhoea : Treatment of dysmenorrhoea
Adult	Pain : Analgesic treatment for peri-operative use only	Pain : Analgesic treatment for peri-operative use only
Adult	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids
Adult	Migraine : Treatment of an acute attack – mild to moderate migraine	Migraine : Treatment of an acute attack – mild to moderate migraine
Adult	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with medium potency opioids	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with medium potency opioids
Adult	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with medium potency opioids	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with medium potency opioids
Adult	Peri-operative analgesia : Specialist peri-operative analgesia	Peri-operative analgesia : Specialist peri-operative analgesia
Adult	Corneal abrasions : Treatment of corneal abrasions	Corneal abrasions : Treatment of corneal abrasions
Adult	Pain : Acute pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids	Pain : Acute pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids
Adult	Herpes zoster (shingles) : Treatment of herpes zoster	Herpes zoster (shingles) : Treatment of herpes zoster
Adult	Musculoskeletal pain : Treatment of musculoskeletal pain	Musculoskeletal pain : Treatment of musculoskeletal pain
Adult	Pain : Chronic pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids	Pain : Chronic pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids
Adult	Prostatitis : Treatment of acute prostatitis	Prostatitis : Treatment of acute prostatitis
Adult	Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) : Treatment of JIA with NSAIDs	Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) : Treatment of JIA with NSAIDs
Adult	Rheumatoid Arthritis : Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis with a NSAID	Rheumatoid Arthritis : Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis with a NSAID
Adult	Osteoarthritis : Treatment of Osteoarthritis with an oral NSAID	Osteoarthritis : Treatment of Osteoarthritis with an oral NSAID
Adult	Urinary tract infection (UTI) : Catheter-associated UTI	Urinary tract infection (UTI) : Catheter-associated UTI
Adult	Axial Spondyloarthritis : Treatment of Axial Spondyloarthritis with NSAIDs	Axial Spondyloarthritis : Treatment of Axial Spondyloarthritis with NSAIDs
Adult	Migraine : Treatment of an acute attack – moderate to severe migraine	Migraine : Treatment of an acute attack – moderate to severe migraine

Adult	Opioid dependence : Opioid maintenance prescribing options	Opioid dependence : Opioid maintenance prescribing options
Child	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids
Child	Poisoning : Paracetamol poisoning	Poisoning : Paracetamol poisoning
Child	Migraine : Treatment of an acute migraine attack – step one	Migraine : Treatment of an acute migraine attack – step one
Child	Migraine : Treatment of an acute abdominal migraine attack – step one	Migraine : Treatment of an acute abdominal migraine attack – step one
Child	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with non-opioids
Child	Pain : Analgesic treatment for peri-operative use only	Pain : Analgesic treatment for peri-operative use only
Child	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with medium potency opioids	Pain : Acute pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with medium potency opioids
Child	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with medium potency opioids	Pain : Chronic pain (mild to moderate) – treatment with medium potency opioids
Child	Haemorrhoids : Treatment of haemorrhoids	Haemorrhoids : Treatment of haemorrhoids
Child	Corneal abrasions : Treatment of corneal abrasions	Corneal abrasions : Treatment of corneal abrasions
Child	Pain : Chronic pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids	Pain : Chronic pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids
Child	Pain : Acute pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids	Pain : Acute pain (moderate to severe) – treatment with strong opioids
Child	Poisoning : General guidance on the emergency treatment of poisoning	Poisoning : General guidance on the emergency treatment of poisoning
Child	Musculoskeletal pain : Treatment of pain and inflammation in rheumatic disease	Musculoskeletal pain : Treatment of pain and inflammation in rheumatic disease
Pharmacy First	Pain : Pharmacy First - Analgesics and antipyretics	Pain : Pharmacy First - Analgesics and antipyretics
Pharmacy First	Musculoskeletal pain : Pharmacy First - Musculoskeletal and joint pain	Musculoskeletal pain : Pharmacy First - Musculoskeletal and joint pain
Pharmacy First	Urinary tract infection (UTI) : Pharmacy First - Cystitis	Urinary tract infection (UTI) : Pharmacy First - Cystitis
Pharmacy First	Oral ulceration : Pharmacy First - Oral ulceration and inflammation	Oral ulceration : Pharmacy First - Oral ulceration and inflammation
Pharmacy First	Herpes zoster (shingles) : Pharmacy First - Shingles	Herpes zoster (shingles) : Pharmacy First - Shingles

Paracetamol – indications on East Region Formulary within formulary decisions

Drug	Indication	Decision Date	SMC ref	Formulary Committee Decision	Additional comments on formulary
Paracetamol	Short-term treatment of moderate pain following surgery in children	01/02/2005	SMC (172/05)	Routinely available	This updates SMC advice No. 137/04 which covered other patient groups. February 2005 - Included in the Formulary, for Specialist Use only. Link to formulary decision