



United Kingdom

Department of Health

Pharmaceutical provision in hospitals

- Most in-patient treatment is provided in public hospitals run by the National Health Service (NHS).
- Most hospitals have pharmacies - small hospitals obtain supplies from larger hospitals or community pharmacies. In terms of the delivery chain, manufacturers and wholesalers supply hospital pharmacies.
- Hospital pharmacists combine clinical and technical roles - providing prescribing advice to clinicians and delivering clinical services and managing purchasing and dispensing activities.

Purchasing of medicines in the hospital sector

- Hospitals purchase medicines locally against framework agreements awarded by the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (NHS PASA) at either national or regional levels.
- Prices in hospitals are often lower than prices in the community as hospitals purchase under contracts and may obtain a discount off the NHS list price where medicines have therapeutic competition. Hospital prices are not published.
- Hospital pharmacists purchase medicines agreed by their pharmaceutical and therapeutic committee (known as drugs and therapeutic committee in the UK).

Financing of medicines in the hospital sector

- Hospitals are reimbursed by their primary care trust for most medicines through a standard charge for an episode of care (Payment by Results tariff), which includes the cost of the medicine.
- Patients do not pay a prescription charge for any medicines dispensed on the NHS in hospital.
- There are no national reimbursement lists for in-patient care but the majority of hospitals have pharmaceutical formularies - some have joint formularies with primary care trusts.

Evaluation and Interface management

- A hospital trust's expenditure on medicines is monitored closely, usually by the Chief Pharmacist. In England, NHS PASA collects data at trust level (95% of purchasing information) and is able to measure the performance of its procurement arrangements and give feedback to trusts on their performance.
- Area Prescribing and Medicines Management Committees, whose 'member' organisations are primary and secondary care commissioners and providers, work together to ensure a consistent health community approach to medicines management.
- The National Prescribing Centre produces resources to support commissioners (purchasers of health care) in relation to prescribing and medicines management. Further information at www.npc.co.uk