

Update on The Drug Tariff; Category H and Part IXA Proposed Changes

***PLEASE NOTE ALL SLIDE DATA RELEVANT
ONLY FOR MARCH 2026***

Greg Bull
Dispensing Doctor Experts



Quick Advert



- Remote profitability review and snapshot report with 30 minute follow up session for only £245 + vat for March and April 2026 bookings

Snapshot Figures for Dispensary [1 month]	
Number of items dispensed	8084
Dispensing fees	£17,131.16
Dispensing fee per item	£2.12
Drug Reimbursement After Clawback	£46,272.05
Drug Reimbursement After Clawback per item	£5.72
Total actual spend	£44,648.61
Gross profit including dispensing fee	£19,712.00
Gross profit including dispensing fee per item	£2.43

A New Webinar?

- Is anyone interested in a webinar on ePACT2?
- Still looking for a practice where I can look at ePACT2 near Northamptonshire if possible



Introduction

- Reflective Learning
- Please share best practice in the chat box



The Drug Tariff

- We used to call a 2 hour session a “whistle-stop tour of the Drug Tariff”!
- Is the Drug Tariff as relevant and essential as it once was with automatic endorsing etc on GP Medical Systems?
- How much time do you have [during dispensing] to make practical use of the Drug Tariff?



The Drug Tariff

- Determines the reimbursement price of most medicines available on an NHS Prescription
- Determines other payments to **pharmacy**
- Determines standards and quantities
- Is the cost control mechanism for Primary Care prescriptions
- Written primarily for pharmacy **not all sections** relate to Dispensing Doctors



The Drug Tariff Online

- [Google Drug Tariff Online](#)
- [Look at the various sections!](#)

[Drug Tariff updates](#)

[Drug Tariff Part VIII](#)

[Drug Tariff Part IX](#)

[Drug Tariff Part XIV](#)

[Back copies of the Drug Tariff](#)



The Drug Tariff
Online [Double
check the date
to ensure latest
version!]

ELECTRONIC DRUG TARIFF

**Compiled on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care
by the NHS Business Services Authority,
NHS Prescription Services**

© Crown Copyright 2026. Published with permission of the Department of Health and Social Care
on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office.

Applications for reproduction should be made in writing in the first instance to the
Office for Public Sector Information, Information Policy Team, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU.

ISSN 2049-5579

Issue: March 2026 [Accessibility Statement](#)



The Drug Tariff – Primary Reading; The Preface

- The Preface [what is happening now]
 - Additions to Drug Tariff
 - Deletions from Drug Tariff
 - Category Changes

The Drug Tariff – Primary Reading; The Preface

- Changes this month CATEGORY H

PAGE 414

Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 60mg tablets	12	300	C	Sudafed Decongestant
---	----	-----	---	-------------------------

Now Reads

Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 60mg tablets	12	302	H	
---	----	-----	---	--

What is Category H? Drug Tariff Definition [not helpful really]

2.3 Category H - Drugs which are not readily available as licensed generic medicines and are available from more than one supplier. Category H reimbursement prices are set using information from suppliers obtained under the Health Service Products (Provision and Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2018. All available pack sizes will be considered. Broken Bulk may be claimed, if necessary.

What is Category H? Simply Explained

- Over time manufacturers have created versions of established branded medicines
- i.e. Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 60mg tablets
- And the Drug Tariff Price until now has been based on the [usually] original brand Sudafed
- However, the original brand price doesn't necessarily reflect the actual purchase price OR NHS List price of the various alternatives

Why have they introduced Category H?

- Presumably to save the NHS money by lowering the reimbursement price of items to a figure closer to the actual purchase price
- Prescribing only GPs will write generically by default for most medicines UNLESS there is a clinical/social argument
- Should m/r x/l prolonged release medicines be written generically? [doxazosin 4mg m/r is now Cat H and is prescribed generically 95% of the time]
- The new National Formulary [?]

Dm+d browser for
Pseudoephedrine
hydrochloride
60mg tablets

[Boots Decongestant 60mg tablets](#)

The Boots
Company Plc

[Sudafed Decongestant 60mg tablets](#)

McNeil Products
Ltd

[Care Decongestant 60mg tablets](#)

Thornton & Ross
Ltd

[Multi-Action Actifed 60mg/2.5mg tablets](#)

McNeil Products
Ltd

I don't think anyone saw this coming!

- The net result of the calculations means the reimbursement price has actually gone up for this medicine!

PAGE 414

Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 60mg tablets	12	300	C	Sudafed Decongestant
---	----	-----	---	-------------------------

Now Reads

Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 60mg tablets	12	302	H	
---	----	-----	---	--



Category H Key Points

- March 2026 a slow start [testing the waters?]
- Prices calculated quarterly
- A “phased approach” to gradually move items from Cat C [Original brand price] to Cat H [price calculated and based on “market data”]



Category H Changes March 2026

	Feb 26 DT Price	March 26 DT Price	Price Change	
Cinchocaine 5mg / Hydrocortisone 5mg suppositories	508	431	-£	0.77
Doxazosin 4mg modified-release tablets	500	524	£	0.24
Etodolac 600mg modified-release tablets	1550	1556	£	0.06
Isosorbide mononitrate 25mg modified-release capsules	422	553	£	1.31
Nicotine 4mg medicated chewing gum sugar free	1357	1018	-£	3.39
Omeprazole 10mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets	930	944	£	0.14
Omeprazole 20mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets	1392	1404	£	0.12
Omeprazole 40mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets	696	692	-£	0.04
Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 60mg tablets	300	302	£	0.02
Ursodeoxycholic acid 500mg tablets	8000	6907	-£	10.93
Verapamil 120mg modified-release tablets	771	767	-£	0.04

Example Etodolac 600mg

Page 1 of 1 (2 total results)

Sort: [name](#) | [relevance](#) Page size: [20](#) [50](#) [100](#)

Actual Medicinal Product (AMP)

Supplier

Virtual Medicinal Product (VMP)

[Etopan XL 600mg tablets](#)

Sun Pharma UK Ltd

[Etodolac 600mg modified-release tablets](#)

[Lodine SR 600mg tablets](#)

Almirall Ltd

[Etodolac 600mg modified-release tablets](#)



Example Etodolac 600mg

- Consider the acquisition cost first!
- Etopan XL dm+d = £14.60
- Lodine SR dm+d = £15.50
- BUT Lodine SR has a 31.25% discount via PSUK
- What about Etopan XL?

Category H What Do You Need To Do?

- Have a system in place!
- The most basic thing to consider is; has the reimbursement price gone down? If so then some further action may be required.
- If the reimbursement price has gone up, then less likely to have an impact BUT suppliers may react to a Drug Tariff rise by upping their prices...

Category H What Do You Need To Do?

- YOU have control over the prescription [unlike community pharmacy]
- It is still all about the ***purchase price*** vs the ***reimbursement price*** – **check one vs the other**
- **Decide which items to prescribe by brand and which to leave as generic**
- Reimbursement price for a generic prescription [Cat H] Drug Tariff vs reimbursement price for a branded prescription [dm+d]
- Remember dm+d overrules Drug Tariff via endorsing and prescribing in the main body of the prescription

Category H Further Suggestions

- Look at your systems and processes for ordering/checking [have a laminated CAT H list in the dispensary for reference?
- Where you have decided to prescribe by brand add a sticky note to the generic location on the shelf?
- Give your prescribers a list of items to prescribe by brand?
- Send generic Cat H prescriptions back to the prescriber where relevant?
- Alter the Cat H prescription where relevant or endorse in the main body?

Correct
prescribing
ensures correct
reimbursement

Endorsements	<p>What you write in here affects your reimbursement</p> <p>Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 60mg = DT Price</p> <p>Sudafed 60mg = dm+d/NHS List price</p>	Office use
Signature of Doctor		Date 02/03/26



Dm+d

- Familiarize yourself with and use the Dictionary of Medicines and Devices
- A whole session in itself – not planned until the late Spring/early Summer but bespoke training is always available



Category H Remain Vigilant!

- March 2026 Cat H changes are minimal
- BEWARE the future and keep checking the Drug Tariff preface regularly!
- There may be some shocks in the future
- **Oxycodone?**
- **Inhalers!**

The Drug Tariff Don't forget Other Changes!

- Other changes this month

PAGE 417

Rivastigmine 9.5mg/24hours transdermal patches	30	1997	C	Alzest
---	----	------	---	--------

Now Reads

Rivastigmine 9.5mg/24hours transdermal patches	30	7797	C	
---	----	------	---	--

The Drug Tariff: Part VIII A Medicines



- Category A reimbursement based on a basket of prices – price can change monthly
- Category M reimbursement based on agreed profit left in the supply chain for Community Pharmacy – price usually changes quarterly [occasional monthly change in exceptional circumstances]
- Category C reimbursement based upon a particular brand, wholesaler or distributor price
- Category H reimbursement based on “market data”

The Drug Tariff: Part IX Medical Devices

- Generally speaking only medical devices which are listed in Part IX of the Drug Tariff can be prescribed, dispensed and reimbursed
- The greatest source of returned prescriptions and possibly the most confusing for a dispenser!

The Drug Tariff: Part IX Medical Devices

- Changes are coming
- I had hoped to be able to give further clarification by now but changes seem to be delayed [probably due to the complexity of the proposed changes and benchmarks!]



Drug Tariff Part IX [Medical Devices]

- Apologies for bringing along more potential headaches in this area!
- There will be changes to Part IX in 2026 due to consultation
- New “clusters” comparing prices and products
- Could lead to even more confusion and returned prescriptions...
- But could lead to more transparency?

Drug Tariff Part IXA [Medical Devices]

What is the Solution?



- Work out what works in your dispensary – your systems and processes
- Part IXA devices should be prescribed by brand if possible
- Generic prescriptions for Part IXA devices more likely to be sent back or queried
- Is the item being dispensed have a CE Mark [much more likely to be a Medical Device if it does]?
- Sticky labels on shelves to indicate Medical Devices?
- Eye drops [Part IXA Devices] kept in a drawer separate from medicines?

Question
Time:

- Any questions?

