

National trends in the prescribing of controlled drugs

Notes on data: Data on prescribing is collected by [ePACT2](#) – an online application that provides authorised users with access to prescription data held by NHS Business Services Authority. For prescribing in the NHS, including hospitals and dental services, we have extracted data from this application for the years 2022, 2023 and 2024 to provide overall figures and trend analysis. For non-medical prescribing, the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service, and requisitions and prescribing in independent primary care, the data for 2024 was supplied directly by NHS Business Services Authority.

In this report, we compare current data for 2024 with the data published in our report for 2023. There may be changes to overall figures for 2023, as ePACT2 may be updated over time.

Prescribing trends in primary care

In this section, we highlight trends of the most prescribed controlled drugs.

Overall prescribing of controlled drugs in 2024 - Schedules 2 to 5

Total controlled drug items prescribed by NHS primary care services increased slightly by 0.4%:

- **74,160,671 items in 2024**
- 73,851,955 items in 2023

The cost of this was £585,671,333 in 2024 compared with £572,621,516 in 2023 (an increase in cost of 2%).

Overall prescribing levels across the different schedules remain stable and prescribing trends in NHS primary care in 2024 are very similar to previous years (figure 3):

- There were increases in prescribing volumes of medicines that are licensed to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), such as dexamfetamine, lisdexamfetamine and methylphenidate (figure 7).
- Prescribing of testosterone continued to increase.
- There was also an increase in non-medical prescribing, as prescribing by pharmacists continues to grow and again accounts for over half of non-medical prescribing.
- There was a reduction in prescribing of pholcodine, pethidine, co-proxamol, oxazepam, nitrazepam, fentanyl, diamorphine, zopiclone and zolpidem.

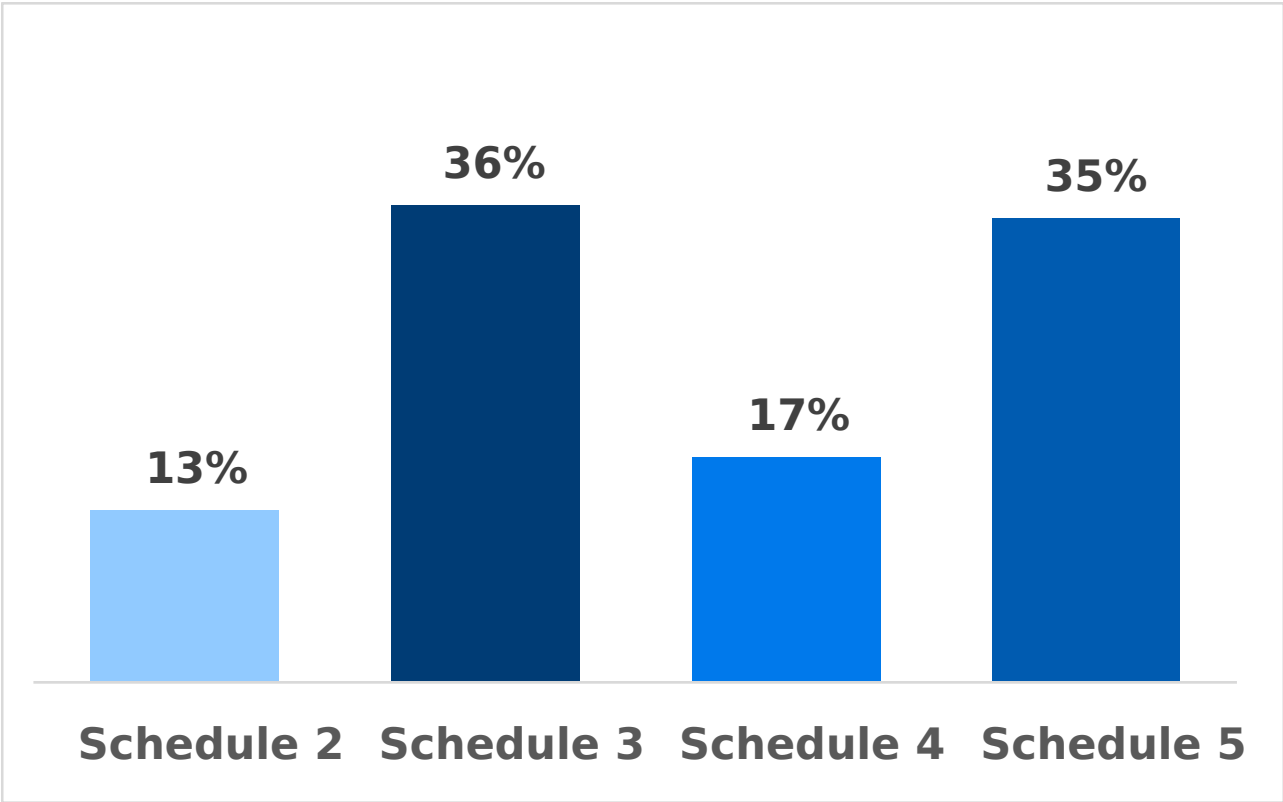
Figure 3: Prescribing of controlled drugs by schedule in 2024

Schedule	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Schedule 2	up by 2%	9,514,472	9,359,728
Schedule 3	up by 2%	26,551,610	26,114,783
Schedule 4	down by 3%	12,450,327	12,845,310
Schedule 5	up by less than 0.5%	25,644,262	25,532,134

Of all prescribing of controlled drugs in primary care in 2024:

- **Schedule 2** accounted for 13%
- **Schedule 3** accounted for 36%
- **Schedule 4** accounted for 17%
- **Schedule 5** accounted for 35%

Figure 4: Prescribing of all controlled drugs in primary care, by schedule, 2024



(Totals add up to more than 100% due to rounding)

Patterns of prescribing in NHS primary care

Of the most prescribed controlled drugs in 2024, there was a **reduction in prescribing** for some compared with 2023 (figure 5).

Figure 5: Reductions in prescribing of controlled drugs in 2024

Controlled drug	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Pholcodine (Schedule 5)	down by 98%	113	5,744

Controlled drug	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Pethidine (Schedule 2)	down by 2 5%	1,522	2,035
Diamorphine (Schedule 2)	down by 2 1%	6,559	8,279
Co-proxamol (Schedule 5)	down by 1 8%	4,177	5,078
Oxazepam (Schedule 4)	down by 1 0%	44,042	48,850
Fentanyl (Schedule 2)	down by 9%	681,555	746,034
Zolpidem (Schedule 4)	Down by 7%	579,437	625,656
Co-dydramol (Schedule 5)	down by 6%	1,246,920	1,324,448
Methadone (Schedule 2)	down by 5%	1,629,110	1,711,427
Phenobarbital (Schedule 3)	down by 5%	145,102	153,148

Controlled drug	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Diazepam (Schedule 4)	down by 5%	3,962,912	4,189,217
Zopiclone (Schedule 4)	down by 4%	4,311,158	4,486,295
Dihydrocodeine (Schedule 5)	down by 2%	1,366,965	1,390,035
Temazepam (Schedule 3)	down by 1%	332,834	335,123

Prescribing of pholcodine has continued to reduce following the 2023 [safety alert](#) recommending that it should not be used.

At the same time, of the most prescribed controlled drugs in 2024, there was an increase in prescribing for some, compared with 2023 (figure 6).

Figure 6: Increases in prescribing of controlled drugs in 2024

Controlled drug	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Dexamfetamine (Schedule 2)	up by 50%	169,467	113,308
Lisdexamfetamine (Schedule 2)	up by 27%	630,949	498,620
Testosterone (all forms) (Schedule 4)	up by 13%	683,678	606,002
Methylphenidate (Schedule 2)	up by 7%	1,643,120	1,529,638
Pregabalin (Schedule 3)	up by 5%	9,507,036	9,053,894
Buprenorphine (Schedule 3)	up by 4%	3,485,411	3,349,558
Midazolam (Schedule 3)	up by 1%	370,147	365,586

Looking at the proportions of controlled drugs in different schedules prescribed in 2024:

- pregabalin and gabapentin accounted for 64% of all Schedule 3 prescribing

- diazepam and zopiclone accounted for 66% of all Schedule 4 prescribing
- co-codamol accounted for 59% of all Schedule 5 prescribing
- methylphenidate, lisdexamfetamine and dexamfetamine accounted for 26% of all Schedule 2 prescribing
- morphine sulfate accounted for 29%, and oxycodone 20% of all Schedule 2 prescribing

These general trends are similar to previous years.

Figure 7: Total number of items of methylphenidate, lisdexamfetamine and dexamfetamine prescribed in NHS primary care in England, 2020 to 2024

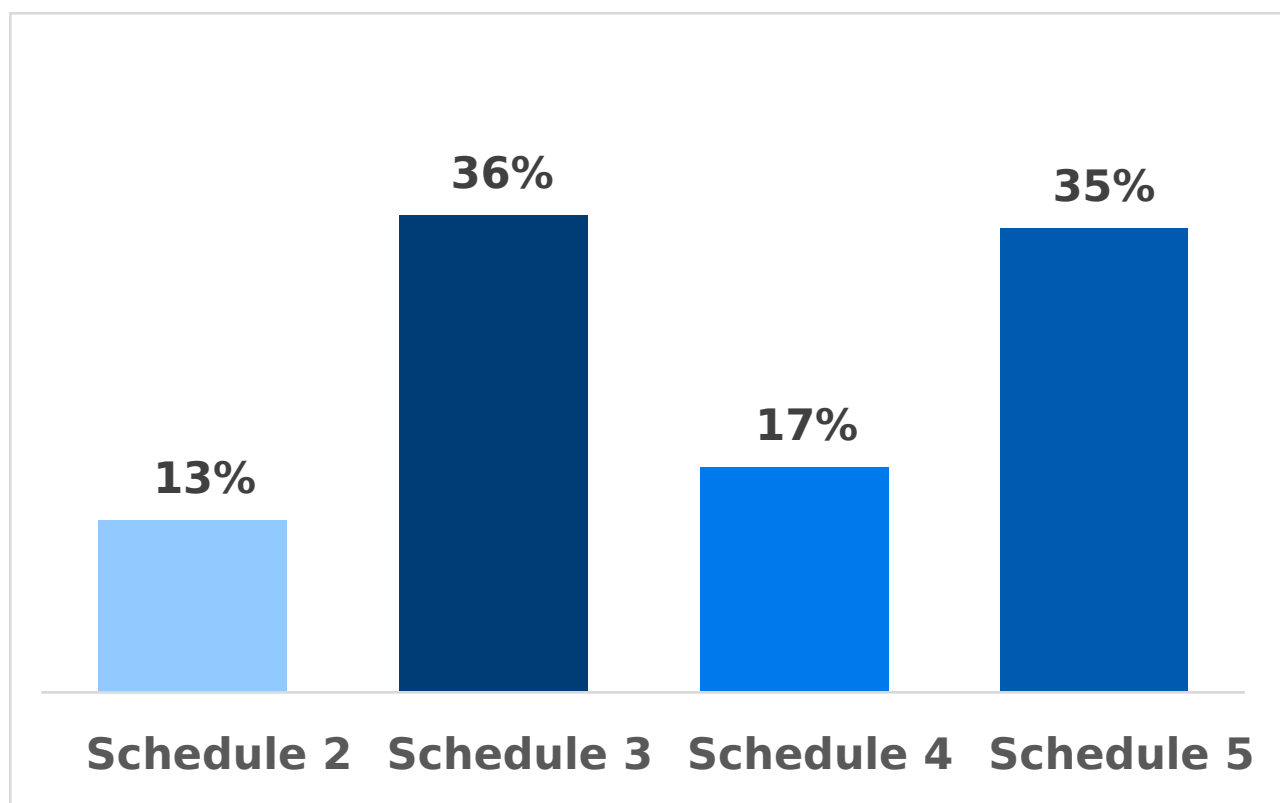


Figure 7 shows the sustained increase in prescribing, which has become more pronounced since 2020. All 3 medicines continue to show relatively sharp upward trends in prescribing compared with many other controlled drugs. We continue to monitor the trends of these in particular because of concerns around capacity in NHS settings, increases in the number and activity of independent clinics (including online clinics) and concerns around shared care, all of which we have highlighted in previous reports.

Adult and child prescribing of medicines for ADHD

This year, we also looked at the trends for prescribing of medicines for ADHD, for both adults and children, since 2015. This includes both prescribing in NHS hospitals and primary care. In general, prescribing for adults has risen steeply since 2019, especially for dexamfetamine and lisdexamfetamine (figures 8 and 9).

Figure 8: Prescribing of medicines for ADHD in adults in NHS hospitals and primary care by number of items, 2015 to 2024

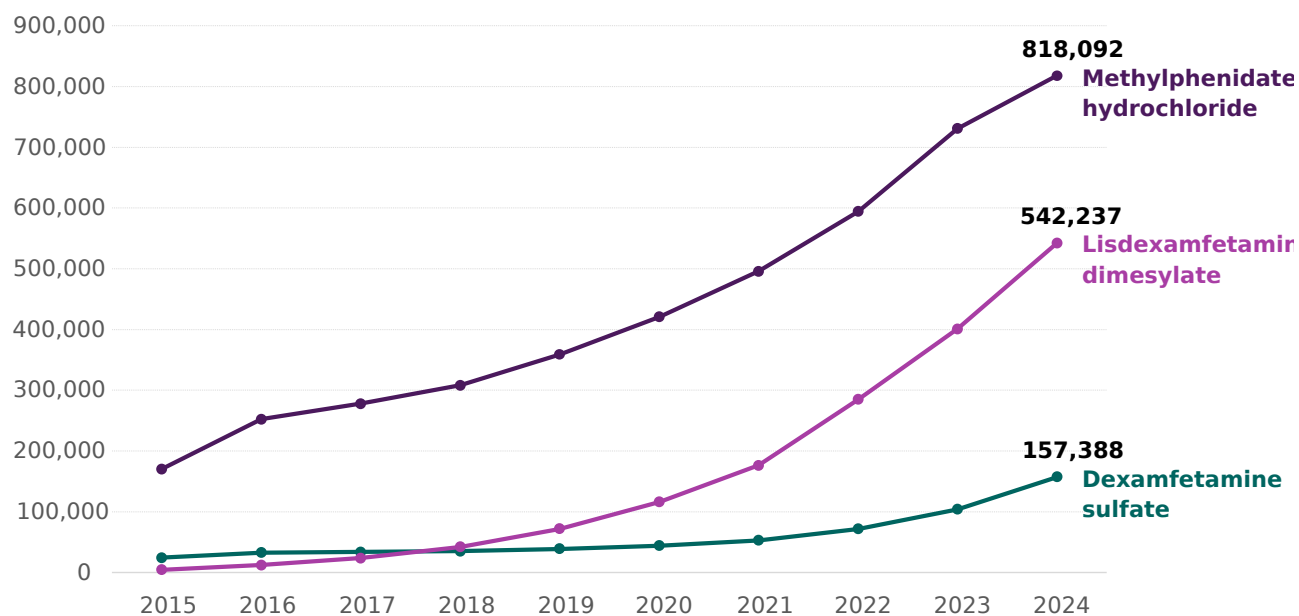
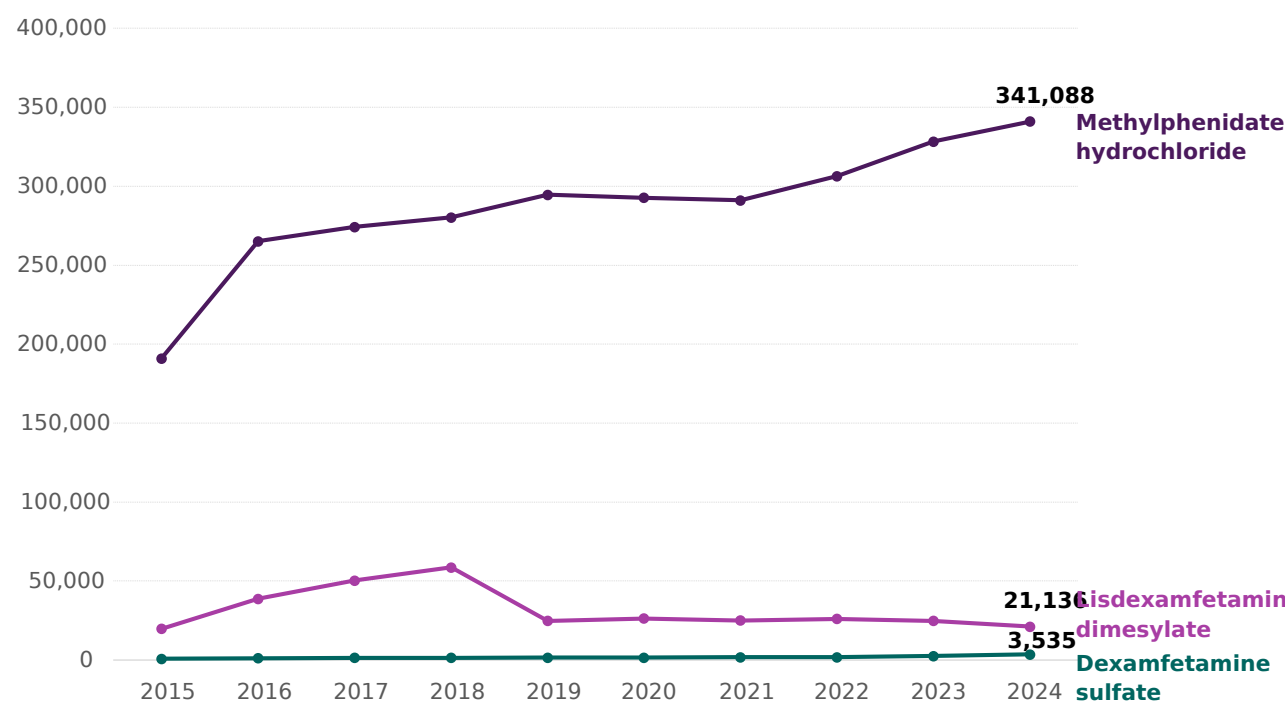


Figure 9: Prescribing of medicines for ADHD in children in NHS hospitals and primary care by number of items, 2015 to 2024



Note: Age data was missing for a number of prescriptions, therefore these have been excluded from figures 8 and 9.

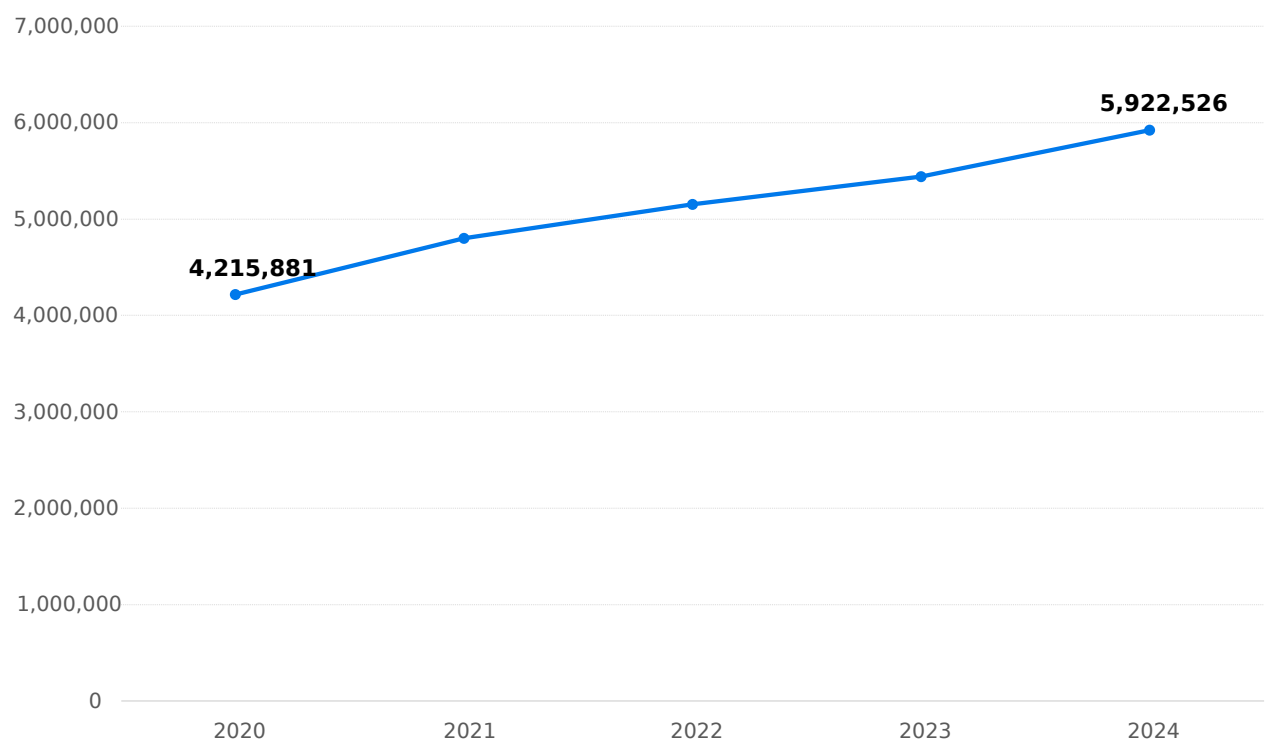
NHS non-medical prescribing

Overall prescribing of controlled drugs by non-medical prescribers (healthcare professionals other than a doctor or dentist) increased by 9% during 2024:

- **5,922,526 items prescribed in 2024**
- 5,440,585 items prescribed in 2023

Figure 10 shows the continued trend for increases in non-medical prescribing since 2020. We expect this to continue, particularly as pharmacists who graduate in 2025 and register with the General Pharmaceutical Council in 2026 will all be prescribers.

Figure 10: Non-medical prescribing of controlled drugs by number of items, 2020 to 2024



Pharmacists undertook 56% of all non-medical prescribing of controlled drugs in 2024 (3,332,074 items) compared with 53% in 2023. There has also been a sharp increase in the number of items prescribed by paramedics.

Figure 11: Non-medical prescribing of controlled drugs in 2024 by professional group

Non-medical prescriber	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Pharmacist	up by 15%	3,332,074	2,908,340
Nurse	up by 1%	2,545,702	2,524,854
Paramedic	Up by 704%	41,154	5,116
Physiotherapist	up by 62%	3,395	2,098
Radiographer	down by 20%	89	111
Podiatrist	Up by 38%	87	63

Figures 12 to 15 show increases in prescribing by pharmacists, nurses and paramedics since 2020.

Figure 12: Pharmacist prescribing of controlled drugs by number of items, 2020 to 2024

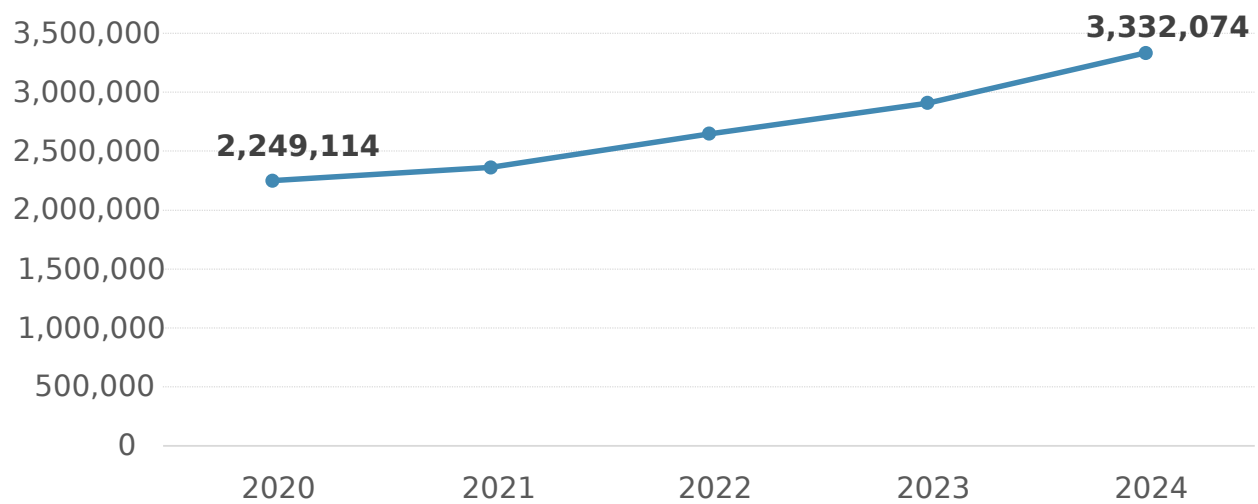


Figure 13: Nurse prescribing of controlled drugs by number of items, 2020 to 2024

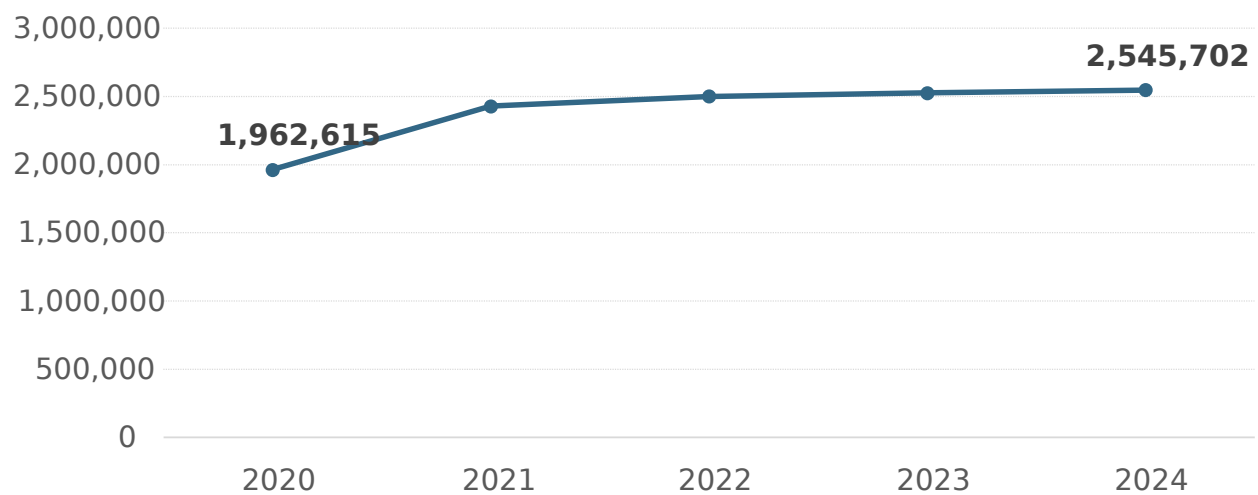
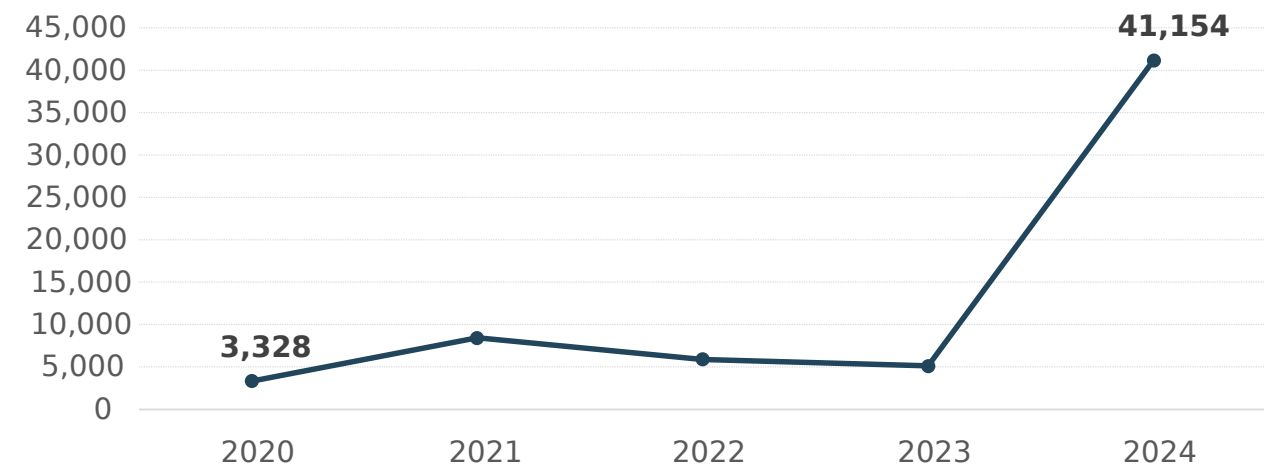


Figure 14: Paramedic prescribing of controlled drugs by number of items, 2020 to 2024



Overall, nurse prescribing accounts for 3% of all controlled drug prescriptions in NHS primary care, with pharmacist prescribing accounting for 5%.

Pharmacist prescribing

Figure 15 shows the controlled drugs prescribed by pharmacists at volumes in excess of 10,000 items during 2024. As a professional group, prescribing volume increases are higher than those for nurses, especially for co-codamol, pregabalin and gabapentin.

Pharmacist prescribing of medicines for ADHD also increased in 2024:

- lisdexamfetamine (schedule 2) increased by 42% from 25,625 to 36,389 items.
- methylphenidate (schedule 2) also increased by 42% from 57,770 to 82,181 items.
- dexamfetamine (schedule 2) prescribing increased by 65% from 6,026 to 9,947 items.

Figure 15: Pharmacist prescribing of controlled drugs in 2024

Controlled drug & Schedule	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Co-codamol (Schedule 5)	up by 15%	648,599	563,232
Pregabalin (Schedule 3)	up by 22%	490,330	401,398
Gabapentin (Schedule 3)	up by 14%	341,202	299,679
Tramadol (Schedule 3)	up by 12%	237,120	212,149
Codeine (Schedule 5)	up by 16%	225,456	195,183
Zopiclone (Schedule 4)	up by 8%	174,167	160,604
Diazepam (Sch 4)	up by 7%	168,907	157,141
Buprenorphine (Schedule 3)	up by 12%	138,758	124,265
Morphine sulfate (Schedule 2)	up by 11%	125,288	112,692

Controlled drug & Schedule	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Morphine sulfate (Schedule 5)	up by 13%	103,592	91,361
Oxycodone (Schedule 2)	up by 13%	96,560	85,593
Methylphenidate (Schedule 2)	up by 42%	82,181	57,770
Dihydrocodeine (Schedule 5)	up by 14%	64,876	56,920
Methadone (Schedule 2)	down by 13%	61,086	70,092
Co-dydramol (Schedule 5)	up by 16%	59,614	51,554
Clonazepam (Schedule 4)	up by 18%	54,232	46,095
Lorazepam (Schedule 4)	up by 14%	45,806	40,195
Lisdexamfetamine (Schedule 2)	up by 42%	36,389	25,625

Controlled drug & Schedule	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Fentanyl (Schedule 2)	down by 1%	28,488	28,689
Zolpidem (Schedule 4)	up by 13%	25,322	22,356
Clobazam (Schedule 4)	up by 23%	23,021	18,781
Testosterone (all forms) (Schedule 4)	up by 20%	27,824	23,102
Temazepam (Schedule 3)	up by 15%	14,170	12,337
Nitrazepam (Schedule 4)	up by less than 0.5%	13,305	13,266
Tapentadol (Schedule 2)	up by 29%	10,170	7,910

Nurse prescribing

Figure 16 shows controlled drugs that were prescribed by nurses at volumes in excess of 10,000 items during 2024.

Figure 16: Nurse prescribing of controlled drugs in 2024

Controlled drug & Schedule	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Methadone hydrochloride (Schedule 2)	down by 5%	508,781	536,072
Co-codamol (Schedule 5)	up by 1%	394,003	391,431
Buprenorphine (Schedule 3)	up by 4%	342,751	328,009
Pregabalin (Schedule 3)	up by 6%	192,358	181,212
Codeine (Schedule 5)	up by 3%	164,389	159,539
Gabapentin (Schedule 3)	up by 4%	157,757	151,814
Tramadol (Schedule 3)	down by 2%	111,575	113,710
Diazepam (Schedule 4)	down by 6%	97,447	103,938
Zopiclone (Schedule 4)	down by 3%	88,489	91,282

Controlled drug & Schedule	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Morphine sulfate (Schedule 2)	up by 3%	80,265	77,796
Morphine sulfate (Schedule 5)	up by 3%	62,568	60,545
Methylphenidate (Schedule 2)	up by 8%	62,087	57,536
Oxycodone (Schedule 2)	up by 10%	51,323	46,708
Dihydrocodeine (Schedule 5)	down by 1%	29,647	29,986
Lorazepam (Schedule 4)	down by 2%	27,757	28,182
Midazolam (Schedule 3)	up by 8%	27,352	25,210
Co-dydramol (Schedule 5)	down by less than 0.5%	25,309	25,404
Lisdexamfetamine (Schedule 2)	up by 18%	22,697	19,201

Controlled drug & Schedule	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Clonazepam (Schedule 4)	up by 3%	18,519	17,929
Testosterone all forms (Schedule 4)	up by 15%	17,348	15,054
Fentanyl (Schedule 2)	down by 8%	15,604	17,011
Zolpidem (Schedule 4)	down by 7%	10,691	11,468

Paramedic prescribing

Paramedic prescribing increased by 704% in 2024 compared with the previous year.

[Changes to the law](#) at the end of 2023 permitted paramedic independent prescribers to prescribe a range of controlled drugs. These are:

- morphine sulfate by oral administration or by injection
- diazepam by oral administration or by injection
- midazolam by oromucosal administration or by injection
- lorazepam by injection
- codeine phosphate by oral administration.

Increases in prescribing are likely linked to this change in prescribing permissions. As in previous years, paramedics continue to prescribe a wider range of controlled drugs than they are legally entitled to. For example, prescribing data shows that 1,176 prescriptions for zopiclone (Schedule 4) were issued and dispensed in 2024.

This serves as a reminder that all prescribers should be working within their scope of practice, and within the legal boundaries of their prescribing rights. Professional regulators also have guidance on this for their registrants.

When we inspect services, we check how providers assure themselves that prescribers are working within their scope of practice, and that the service offered is safe and effective.

Non-medical prescribing in different settings

This year, to gain a better understanding behind the increase in non-medical prescribing, we also looked at the different types of services where prescriptions from non-medical prescribers originate. Figure 17 shows the number of items prescribed in a range of settings. Although most prescribing happens in GP settings, it is also encouraging to see prescribing in other areas, such as in care homes and services in the health and justice sector.

Figure 17: Examples of non-medical prescribing of controlled drug items by profession and setting, 2024

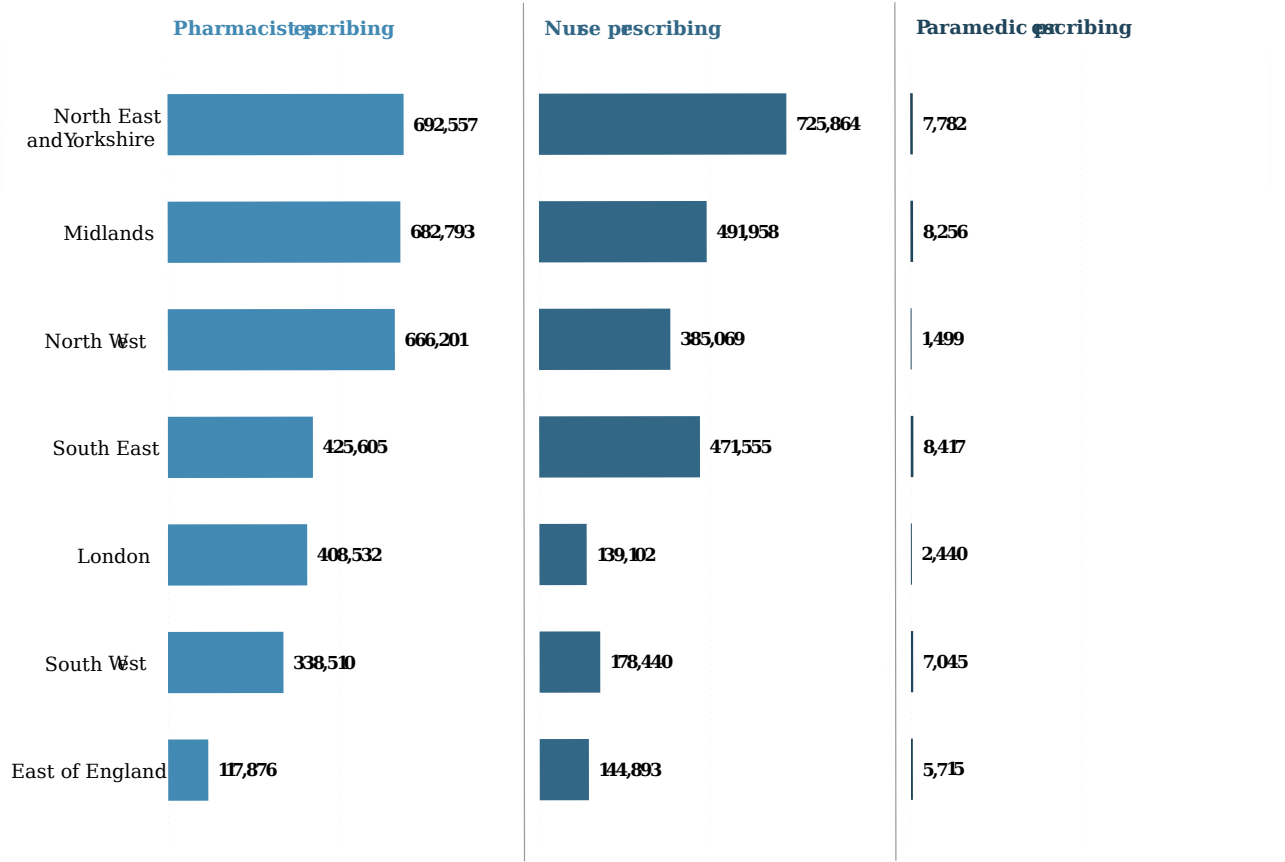
Location	Nurse prescribers	Paramedic prescribers	Pharmacist prescribers
GP practice	1,572,661	38,727	3,238,228

Location	Nurse prescribers	Paramedic prescribers	Pharmacist prescribers
Community health service	235,168	486	42,498
Hospital service	54,868	151	10,026
Hospice	19,825	4	206
Out-of-hours service	12,514	410	4,283
Urgent & emergency care	5,301	727	172
Walk-in-centre	3,507	108	-
Primary care network	1,751	131	240
Walk-in centre and out-of-hours service	1,688	-	-
Care home/care home with nursing	1,329	-	304
Health & justice services	219	-	3
Other	265,021	410	6,856

Non-medical prescribing in geographical locations

We also looked at the geographical split of pharmacist, nurse and paramedic prescribing. This is highest in the North East and Yorkshire and lowest in the East of England.

Figure 18: Geographical prescribing of controlled drug items by non-medical prescribers in England, 2024



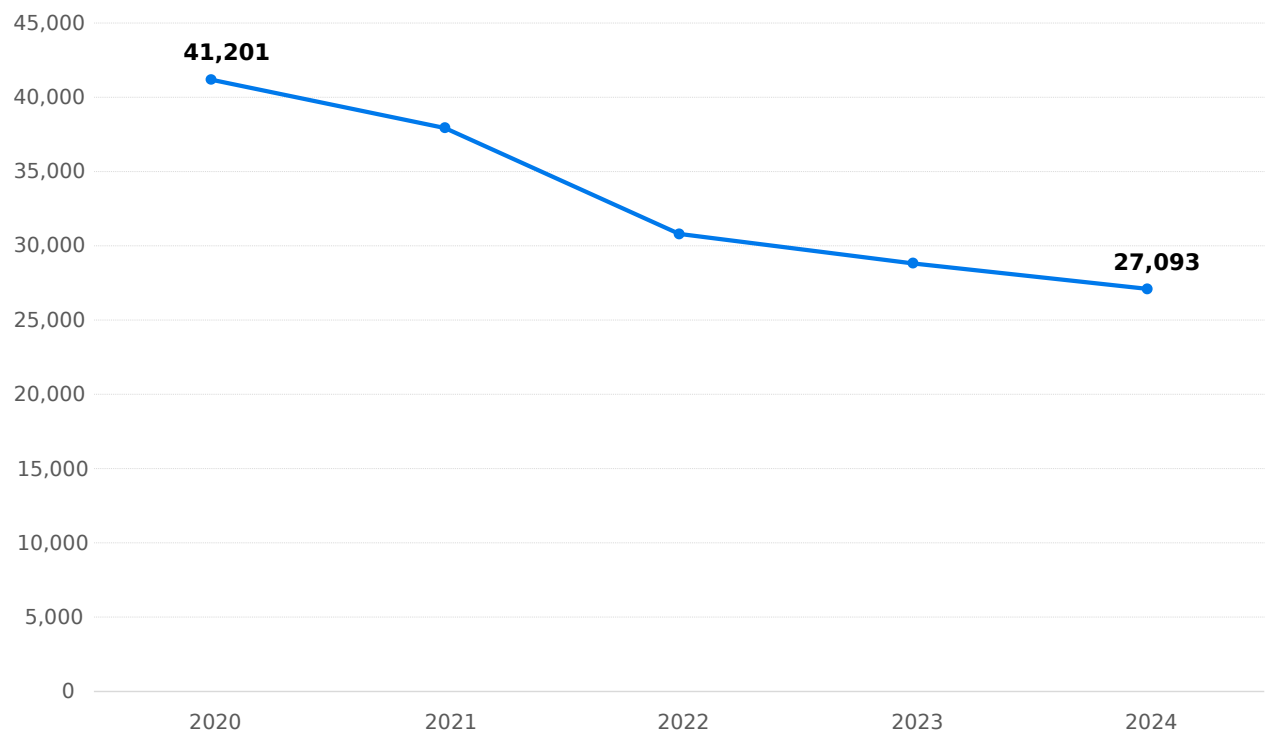
NHS dental prescriptions for controlled drugs

Total controlled drug items prescribed by NHS dentists decreased by 6%:

- 27,093 items in 2024
- 28,819 items in 2023

Since 2021 there has been a gradual reduction in controlled drugs prescribing by NHS dentists (figure 19). This has largely been driven by reduced dihydrocodeine prescribing.

Figure 19: Total controlled drug items prescribed by NHS dentists in England, 2020 to 2024



Dentists working in the NHS can prescribe 3 controlled drugs on NHS dental prescription forms to patients.

Dihydrocodeine: as in previous years, this was the most prescribed medicine, accounting for 80% of total dental prescribing in 2024, although prescribing decreased by 8%:

- 21,783 items prescribed in 2024
- 23,714 items prescribed in 2023

Diazepam: Between 2023 and 2024 prescribing increased by 3% (4,497 total items prescribed in 2024).

Temazepam: Between 2023 and 2024, prescribing increased by 11% (813 total items prescribed in 2024).

Our most recent [State of Care report](#) highlighted that NHS dental care is facing a crisis, as the proportion of adults who have seen an NHS dentist in the last 24 months and children who have seen an NHS dentist in the last 12 months is lower than in 2019/20.

As in previous years, the patterns of decreased prescribing may be an ongoing consequence of this.

ePACT2 Opioid comparators dashboard

[Last year](#), we looked at prescribing of opioids in a specific geographical area. This pattern remained similar for 2025, with prescribing highest in the North of England.

We also looked at prescribing of 'high oral morphine equivalent' volume of opioid prescribing, in combination with other medicines, such as gabapentinoids, antidepressants and z-drugs (figure 20). The risk of harm increases substantially at doses above an oral morphine equivalent of 120mg/day, but there is no increased benefit. Risk can be increased further when this is prescribed alongside these other medicines.

Figure 20: High oral morphine equivalent prescribing with other medicines, 22 January to 18 February 2025 compared with 29 February to 27 March 2024

Medicines prescribed in combination with high oral morphine equivalent	Prescribed for 1 to 84 days	Prescribed for 85 to 168 days	Prescribed for 169 days or more
Gabapentinoids	237 in 2025 263 in 2024	402 in 2025 440 in 2024	24,919 in 2025 26,525 in 2024
Antidepressants	259 in 2025 272 in 2024	445 in 2025 463 in 2024	34,954 in 2025 37,332 in 2024
Benzodiazepines	79 in 2025 109 in 2024	137 in 2025 131 in 2024	6,973 in 2025 7,559 in 2024
Z-drugs	43 in 2025 63 in 2024	69 in 2025 83 in 2024	5,129 in 2025 5,576 in 2024

We have seen a reduction in the co-prescribing of high oral morphine equivalent with other medicines, particularly in patients who have been taking them for a longer period (169 days or more). This could be because some health and care teams place more emphasis on reducing higher risk prescribing.

Prescribing in NHS hospitals for community pharmacy dispensing

In 2024, hospital prescribing (on FP10HP prescription forms that can be dispensed in a community pharmacy) was also broadly in line with 2023.

Total controlled drug items across Schedules 2 to 5 prescribed in hospital using an FP10(HNC) or FP10SS form increased by 5%:

- **1,022,291 items in 2024**
- 978,223 items in 2023

The cost of this was £18,176,281 in 2024 compared with £16,420,790 in 2023 (an increase of 11%).

Of all prescribing of controlled drugs in hospitals for dispensing in a community pharmacy:

- **Schedule 2** accounted for 51%
- **Schedule 3** accounted for 15%
- **Schedule 4** accounted for 20%
- **Schedule 5** accounted for 14%

Figure 21: Prescribing of all controlled drugs in hospitals for dispensing in a community pharmacy, 2024

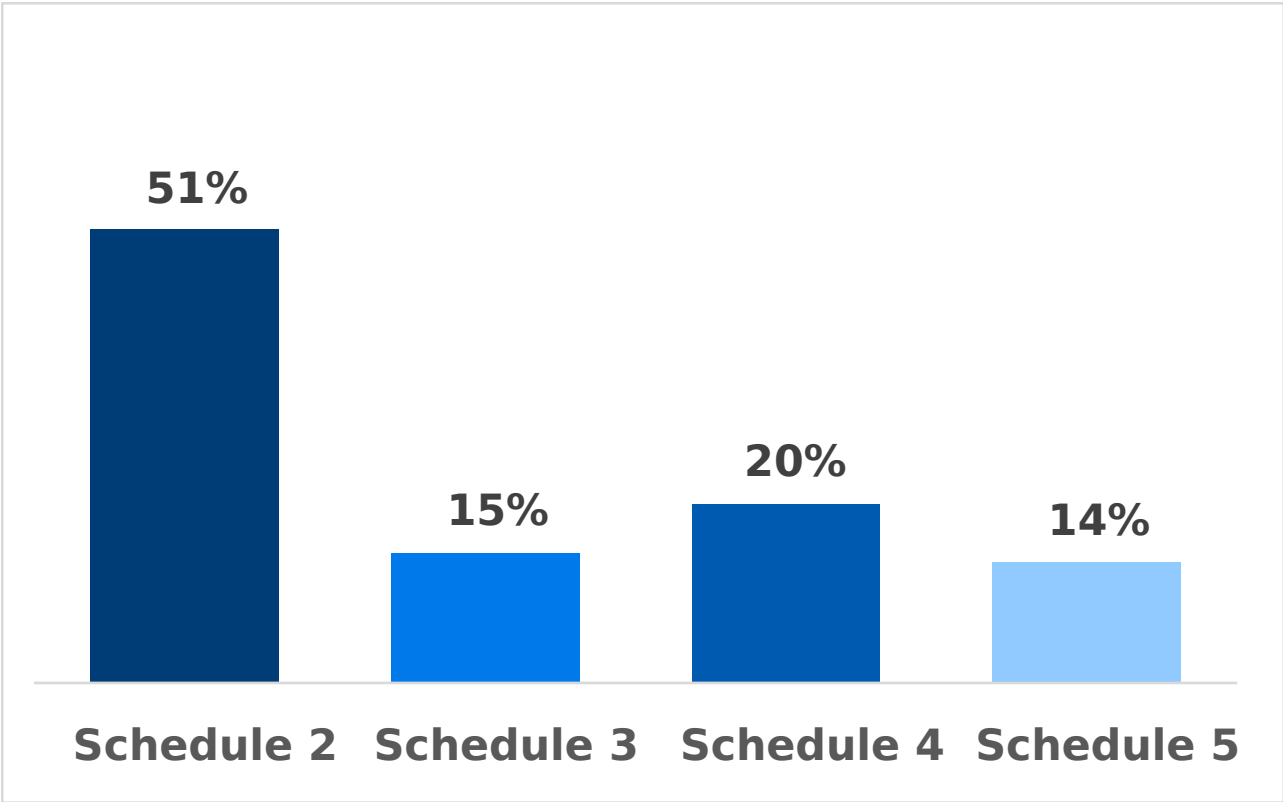


Figure 22: Key reductions in hospital prescribing of controlled drugs for community pharmacy dispensing in 2024

Controlled drug & Schedule	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Methadone (Schedule 2)	down by 6%	235,472	249,631
Buprenorphine (Schedule 3)	down by 6%	107,679	114,887
Temazepam (Schedule 3)	down by 6%	1,651	1,752

Figure 23: Key increases in hospital prescribing of controlled drugs for community pharmacy dispensing in 2024

Controlled drug & Schedule	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Dihydrocodeine (Schedule 5)	up by 29%	6,951	5,393
Oxycodone (Schedule 2)	up by 27%	5,120	4,040
Morphine (Schedule 5)	up by 21%	24,720	20,362
Codeine (Schedule 5)	up by 20%	52,175	43,324
Lisdexamfetamine (Schedule 2)	up by 18%	59,905	50,635
Dexamfetamine (Schedule 2)	up by 14%	10,547	9,228
Methylphenidate (Schedule 2)	up by 12%	204,395	182,071
Co-codamol (Schedule 5)	up by 11%	52,454	47,219

Controlled drug & Schedule	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Gabapentin (Schedule 3)	up by 7%	6,398	5,956
Lorazepam (Schedule 4)	up by 6%	29,566	27,793
Co-dydramol (Schedule 5)	up by 6%	3,408	3,207
Tramadol (Schedule 3)	up by 5%	7,934	7,571
Zolpidem (Schedule 4)	up by 1%	5,409	5,371

NHS Pharmacy First service

The national [NHS Pharmacy First service](#) aims to reduce pressure on primary and urgent care services, including emergency departments and out-of-hours GP services. It does this by referring people to community pharmacies for advice, treatment, and urgent repeat prescriptions, and may supply certain controlled drugs in specific circumstances for a limited period.

Of all controlled drugs supplied in 2024, the majority supplied by Pharmacy First were in Schedule 5. We continue to see increases in the number of controlled drugs supplied through the service. We also see that pharmacists are supplying quantities of controlled drugs that exceed what would be needed for 5 days. This is also something that has been highlighted at many Controlled drug local area networks during the year.

The controlled drugs most commonly supplied by the service in 2024 were:

- **co-codamol** (in a range of forms, including tablets and capsules) 30/500mg, 15/500mg and 8/500mg
- **codeine** 15mg and 30mg tablets
- **co-dydramol** 10/500mg tablets
- **clobazam** 5mg and 10mg tablets
- **clonazepam** 500mcg tablets
- **diazepam** 2mg tablets
- **dihydrocodeine** 30mg tablets
- **morphine sulfate** oral solution 10mg/5ml
- **testosterone** all forms
- **zopiclone** 7.5mg tablets

Private controlled drug prescribing in independent primary care

The total number of controlled drug items prescribed privately across independent primary care services in 2024 increased by 38%:

- **540,227 items in 2024**
- 390,788 items in 2023

Although this is a smaller percentage increase from 2023, (73% increase), it still represents an increase of nearly 150,000 items, which is similar to the increase in number of items in 2023.

As in both 2022 and 2023, this trend is primarily driven by prescribing of Schedule 2 controlled drugs licensed to treat ADHD and could be linked to lack of access to NHS mental health services.

Of all private prescribing of controlled drugs in independent primary care:

- **Schedule 2** accounted for 97%
- **Schedule 3** accounted for 3%

Private prescribing of Schedule 2 controlled drugs

Prescribing of Schedule 2 controlled drugs alone in 2024 increased by 39%:

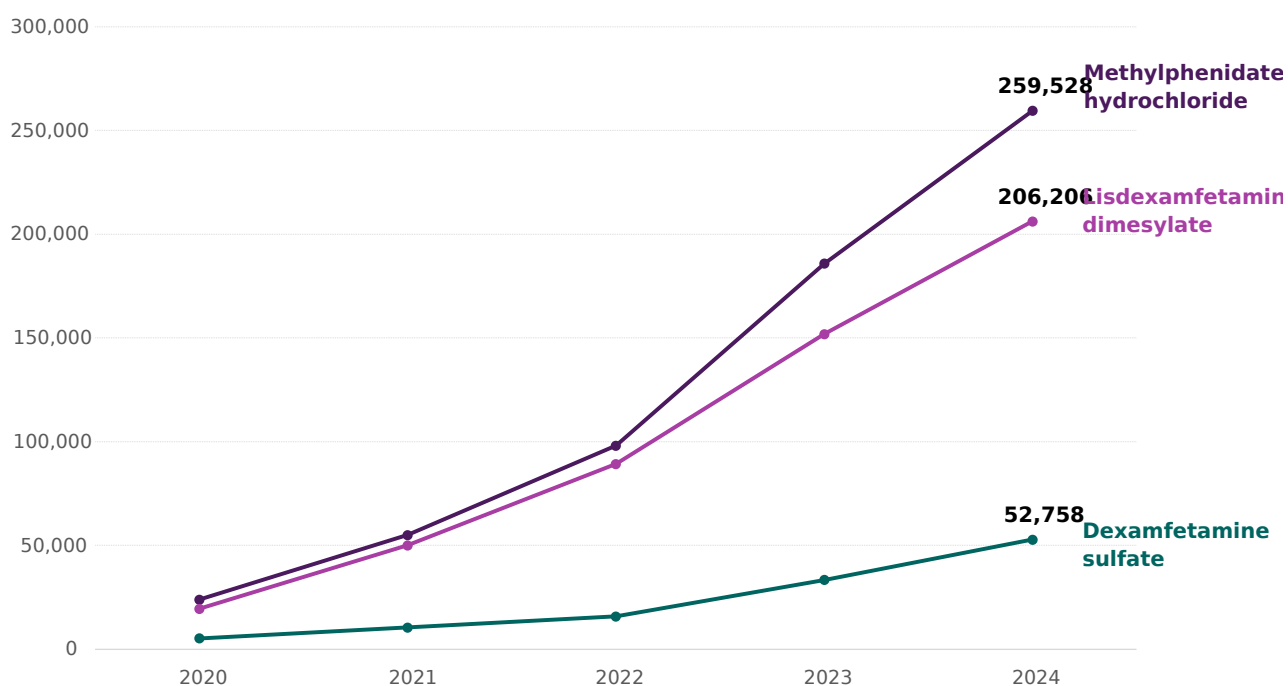
- **525,873 total Schedule 2 items in 2024**
- 378,049 total Schedule 2 items in 2023

This figure does not include unlicensed cannabis-based products for medicinal use and, as in previous years, has largely been driven by the increase in prescribing for medicines licensed for ADHD (figure 25).

Figure 24: Schedule 2 controlled drugs prescribed in independent primary care in 2024

Controlled drug	Percentage change	Total items prescribed in 2024	Total items prescribed in 2023
Methylphenidate	up by 40%	259,528	185,819
Lisdexamfetamine	up by 36%	206,206	151,827
Dexamfetamine	up by 58%	52,758	33,384

Figure 25: Number of items of methylphenidate, lisdexamfetamine and dexamfetamine prescribed annually in independent primary care in England, 2020 to 2024



Private prescribing of Schedule 3 controlled drugs

Prescribing of Schedule 3 controlled drugs in 2024 increased by 14%:

- **14,125 total items prescribed in 2024**
- 12,411 total items prescribed in 2023

Pregabalin: this is the most prescribed drug in Schedule 3, accounting for 53% of all Schedule 3 prescribed items in 2024, with prescribing increasing by 8%:

- **7,510 total items in 2024**
- 6,922 total items in 2023

Across the most commonly prescribed schedule 3 controlled drugs, we have seen increases in:

- **tramadol** (up by 33%, 1,642 total items in 2024)
- **gabapentin** (up by 29%, 1,119 total items in 2024)
- **buprenorphine** (up by 31%, 2,606 total items in 2024)
- **temazepam** (up by 18%, 636 total items in 2024)

At the same time, we have also seen a reduction in the prescribing of midazolam hydrochloride (down by 30%, 560 total items in 2024).

Requisitions

Requisitions are documents that allow the appropriate people to order medicines for use in their professional practice, such as ordering a stock of controlled drugs that are later administered to patients.

The volume of requisitions decreased by 18% in 2024:

- **12,896 total items requisitioned in 2024**

- 15,739 total items requisitioned in 2023

Looking at where these requisitions came from in 2024:

- 73% of all requisitions were from NHS providers (compared with 74% in 2023)
- 27% were from independent organisations (compared with 26% in 2023)

In 2024, the top 10 controlled drugs on requisition remained similar to the previous year, with methadone replacing tramadol in the list (Figure 26).

Figure 26: Most commonly requisitioned Schedule 2 and 3 controlled drugs in 2024

Controlled drug	Percentage of all requisitions	Total items in 2024
Methylphenidate	20%	2,554
Pregabalin	18%	2,355
Morphine sulfate (Schedule 2 and 5)	10%	1,235
Oxycodone	8%	1,074
Buprenorphine	8%	994
Midazolam	8%	983
Gabapentin	6%	773

Controlled drug	Percentage of all requisitions	Total items in 2024
Fentanyl	5%	681
Lisdexamfetamine	5%	642
Methadone hydrochloride	4%	475