**Glossary**

**BNF Code:**

The BNF Code is a 15 digit code in which the first seven digits are allocated according to the categories in the BNF and the last 8 digits represent the medicinal product, form, strength and the link to the generic equivalent product. The digits in the code represent the following information:

1 & 2 BNF Chapter

3 & 4 BNF Section

5 & 6 BNF Paragraph

7 BNF Sub-Paragraph

8 & 9 Chemical substance

10 & 11 Product

12 & 13 Strength / Formulation

14 & 15 Link to the generic equivalent product. A is used when there is no linking record.

**BNF Section Name:**

The primary therapeutic area based on BNF classification for which a drug is used.

**BNF Chemical Name:**

PCA data is based on the therapeutic grouping used in the British National Formulary. The classification is stated in each of the reports and is based on the relevant BNF edition. While the therapeutic classification of drugs occasionally changes, all PCA publications reflect the classification in use at the time of publication.

The NHS Prescription Services has created pseudo BNF chapters, which are not published, for items not included in BNF chapters 1 to 15. The majority of such items are dressings and appliances, which the NHS Prescription Services has classified into four pseudo BNF chapters (20 to 23).

**Drug name:**

Medicines are shown by individual preparation name, which may be proprietary or generic, followed by form and strength. The names used are often presented in an abbreviated form.

**Class of preparation (Prep Class):**

PCA data classifies drugs in four ways:

**Class 1 -** Drugs prescribed and available generically

**Class 2** - Drugs prescribed generically but only available as a proprietary product

**Class 3** - Drugs prescribed and dispensed by proprietary brand name

**Class 4** - Dressings and appliances

**Items dispensed:**

A prescription item refers to a single medicine prescribed by a doctor (or dentist/nurse/etc.) on a prescription form. This is different to quantity i.e. if salbutamol inhaler x 2 is prescribed. This is one item with a quantity of two.

**Quantity (QTY):**

The quantity of a drug dispensed is measured in units depending on the formulation of the product. Quantities are not added together across preparations because of different strengths and formulations.

**Net Ingredient Cost (NIC):**

Net Ingredient Cost is the basic price of the medicine, i.e. the price listed in Part VIII or IX of the Drug Tariff <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/drug-tariff> or for drugs not listed in the Drug Tariff, the list price published by the manufacturer, wholesaler or supplier (See Drug Tariff Part II clause 8). This is the cost of the drug before any discounts are applied and does not include any dispensing costs or fees. It also does not include any adjustment for income obtained where a prescription charge is paid at the time the prescription is dispensed or where the patient has purchased a pre-payment certificate.

NIC is produced to three decimal places and shown in (£) where prior to December 2018 this was in (p).

**Of Which Class 2:**

This shows the number of items which have been prescribed generically that have been dispensed and reimbursed using a proprietary product because a generic version of the drug is not available. The dispenser can choose any suitable proprietary drug to meet the generic order and does not necessarily have to provide information to show what they have supplied. In this situation the data is defined as class 2 but is reported in PCA against the class 3 (proprietary) form of the drug. To make this allocation NHS Business Services Authority apply the following rules:

If there is only one proprietary equivalent, the generic prescribing is attributed to that product.

If there is more than one equivalent proprietary, the data is apportioned across all the equivalent products based on the proprietary prescribing of the drug.

Prior to December 2018, any remainder from the apportioned calculation is added to the first proprietary equivalent as it appears on NHS Prescription Services database. This is to ensure that the amount shared between the proprietary equivalents is exactly equal to the class 2 product dispensed. The apportioned calculation for each of the elements items, quantity and NIC is calculated independently.

From December 2018 onwards, instead of any remainder being allocated to one proprietary equivalent, this is now apportioned between available proprietary equivalents with more precision.

As the apportioned calculation for items, quantity and NIC are calculated independently some preparations may show data for quantity and/or NIC but have no data for items. This may occur where the apportioned allocation is very small.

If there is no proprietary prescribing of the equivalent proprietary products during the processing period, the class 2 prescribing is apportioned across all equivalent proprietary products.

**Standard quantity unit (SQU) is no longer included in the PCA data**

**Available prior to December 2018 SQU:**

This code indicates the form of the drug and the units in which quantity is measured:

Code 1 - a unit (e.g. one tablet, capsule, pack, aerosol etc)

Code 3 - millilitres

Code 6 - grammes

Code 0 - individually formulated (unit varies)

For further information about methodology changes to PCA data from December 2018 please click on the following link:

<https://files.digital.nhs.uk/E5/A014A5/PCA-eng-2018-report.pdf>