

The Importance of Documenting 'Antibiotic Items Prescribed' in Wales

In the Spotlight

While effective prevention is the best way to reduce the need for antibiotic prescribing in dentistry, there are clear clinical indications for their use. The inappropriate use of antibiotics in dental practice increases the risk of antibiotic resistance, contributing to the global challenge of combatting resistant strains. We therefore need to work as a profession to ensure antibiotics are prescribed appropriately, in line with published national guidelines¹. When antibiotics are prescribed, it is important that they are documented accurately by maintaining clear, concise, contemporaneous and complete notes, as well as recording the prescription as part of the FP17W submission. This contributes towards delivering high quality care.

This 2-part article series is intended to remind Providers and Performers of the importance of prescribing antibiotics appropriately and advise on improvements that clinicians can make to ensure good quality of care is provided to their patients, which will ultimately help in combatting antibiotic resistance.

Guidance on Antibiotic Prescribing in General Dental Services:

Between April 2023 and March 2024, **143,549 antibiotics** were prescribed by General Dental Practitioners working in the General and Community Dental Services and subsequently dispensed in the community within Wales. This accounts for **5.9%** of all oral antibiotics prescribed in the primary and community care setting.² There were **13.6% of Courses of Treatment** containing an Antibiotic Prescription, which is an increase from **8.5%** back in 2013-2014, which accounts for a 46.2% increase.³

¹ Bowman-Newmark, J., Vahdati, A., Karki, A., Young, L., Cleary, G. and Thompson, W. (2025), Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Antibiotic Prescribing by Dental Practitioners Across the United Kingdom's Four Countries: A Pharmacoepidemiological Study of Population-Level Dispensing Data, 2016–2023. *Community Dent Oral Epidemiol.* <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdoe.13037>

² Data obtained from NWSSP-PCS (NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership and Public Health Wales) and PHW/HARP (Health Research Authority Assessment Review Portal)

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However, claims level data in Wales showed that only **2.5%** of FP17Ws indicated 'Antibiotic Items Prescribed'. Additionally, the data showed that **29.2%** of General Dental Service (GDS) Contracts did **not** submit **any FP17Ws** with 'Antibiotic Items Prescribed' indicated. This discrepancy represents an under-reporting of antibiotic prescribing when compared with the individual Performer prescribing rate, which is provided by the Shared Services Partnership.⁴

The significance of reporting Antibiotic Prescribing in Dentistry:

Antibiotic prescribing in Primary Dental Care is self-reported and currently under-reported. It is crucial that we record the prescribing of antibiotics through Online FP17W Forms or DPMS [Dental Practice Management Software] systems, to enable accurate monitoring of this data set item. This will be covered in the second part of this article series.

It is a regulatory requirement⁵ that all appropriate indicators / items on the Clinical Data Set (CDS) are captured on an FP17W claim form prior to submission.

This includes 'Prescribed Items: Antibiotics' field when antibiotics have been prescribed.

If there is an issue with capturing the data, it is the Provider's responsibility to check with their DPMS supplier directly to ensure that claims data is being transmitted accurately.

In the second part of this article series, we will go through the clinical record-keeping process when prescribing, and how to ensure this is correctly recorded on FP17 forms, whether that is on Compass Online or through your DPMS supplier.

⁴ [Healthcare associated infections and antimicrobial resistance goals 2024 to 2025](#)

⁵ National Health Service (General Dental Services Contracts) Regulation 2005 (Paragraph 38, Section 2)