

Dispensing Factsheet: Disallowed items

This factsheet prepared by PSNC’s Dispensing and Supply team explains what disallowed items are and the reasons why certain items may be disallowed by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA). It also highlights the checks that can be made during the dispensing process to try and minimise the risks of dispensing and/or endorsing items that are not permitted on the NHS.

What is a disallowed item?

A disallowed item is one that has **NOT** been passed for payment by the NHSBSA. Disallowed items should not be confused with items which are referred back to contractors for further clarification because insufficient information was available for the NHSBSA to process the prescription(s) for payment (for example, due to missing endorsements).

Why are prescription items disallowed?

The NHSBSA apply a coding system to identify up to 19 possible reasons for disallowing items that are ordered on the NHS of which 7 are applicable to community pharmacies (see table below). Each prescription item disallowed by the NHSBSA is assigned a DA code followed by a number to indicate the reason for the disallowed item.

A list of Disallowed Reason Codes (pharmacy only) in descending order by item volume and % frequency (using disallowed item figures between August 2019 – July 2020)

Disallowed reason code	Disallowed reason	Item volume and % frequency (in descending order)
DA20	As it is a nominated EPS token incorrectly submitted for processing and reimbursement (excluding tokens used to claims for supplies made against SSPs)	30,941 (62.5%)
DA2	As it is not an appliance or chemical reagent listed in Part IX of the Drug Tariff	11,637 (23.5%)
DA4	As it is not a drug listed in the Dental Practitioners’ Formulary (DPF) in Part XVIIIA of the Drug Tariff from which a dentist may order on a valid FP10D Form	3,528 (7.1%)
DA3	As it is not a drug, appliance or chemical reagent listed in the Nurse Prescribers’ Formulary (NPF) in Part XVIIIB(i) of the Drug Tariff from which a community nurse prescriber may order on a valid NHS prescription form	2,569 (5.2%)
DA1	As certain drugs and other substances listed in the Part XVIII of the Drug Tariff cannot be prescribed on the NHS	350 (0.7%)
DA19	As it is an item that is not prescribed on an authorised or valid form	323 (0.7%)
DA6	As it is not a drug or preparation which may be prescribed on a blue FP10MDA instalment dispensing form	149 (0.3%)
Total		49,497 items

How many items are disallowed by the NHSBSA?

According to information provided by the NHSBSA, nearly 50,000 items were disallowed in the 12 months between August 2019 and July 2020.

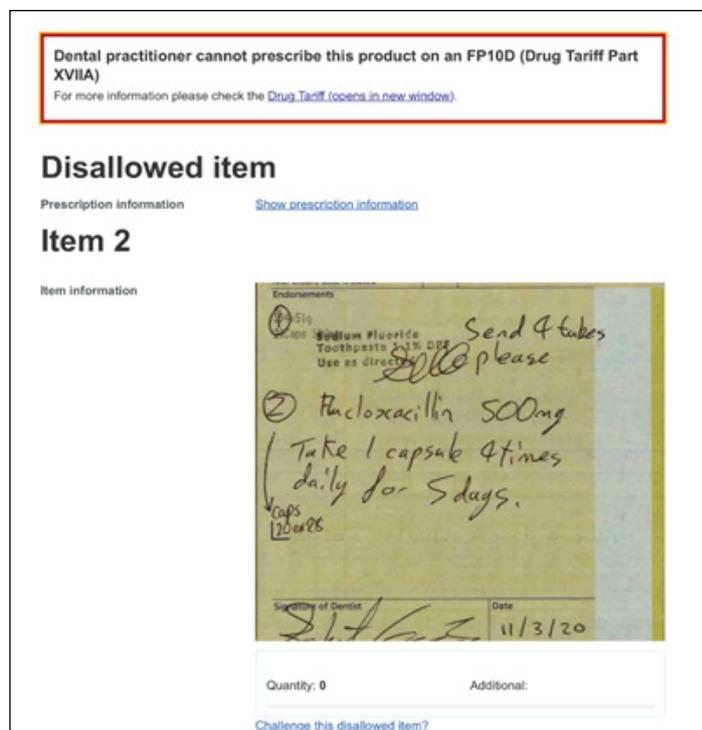
For the most recent month we have data for – July 2020 – a total of 3,256 items were disallowed of which 490 items (15%)

were issued via EPS and the rest (85%) were paper prescriptions/tokens. However, if we exclude the number of disallowed EPS tokens that were incorrectly submitted for reimbursement (reason code DA20), then the total number of disallowed EPS items represents 40% (490) of the remaining total of all disallowed items (1,210) in July 2020.

How do I know if an item submitted for payment has been disallowed by the NHSBSA?

Currently, there are three methods by which NHSBSA notify contractors if an item has been disallowed.

- 1. Manage Your Service (MYS)** – contractors can now receive details of any disallowed items including the item number and disallowed reason via the MYS portal (see image below). Disallowed items via MYS can arrive daily. Contractors wishing to access their digital referred back and disallowed items using MYS should contact the MYS team by emailing nhsbsa.mys@nhs.net to enable these features on the MYS portal.



- 2. Paper** – contractors that are not signed up to receive digital disallowed items via the MYS portal, receive a letter via the post from the NHSBSA with information of any disallowed items. An image of the prescription is copied on to an A4 sheet (see example below) identifying the disallowed item, with a DA reason code to inform the contractor why the item was disallowed.

3. **Prescription Item (Px) report** – contractors can check whether a product has been disallowed by also checking their Px report. To access item reports, contractors should register for the Information Services Portal on the NHSBSA's website.

What if I disagree with the reason(s) given by the NHSBSA for disallowing an item?

If it is believed that an item has been incorrectly disallowed by the NHSBSA, contractors may submit a challenge to the NHSBSA, who will investigate the issue and rectify any missing payments if a processing error is identified.

To challenge disallowed items returned via MYS, contractors can click on a link available under the disallowed item displayed on the portal. A free-text box is provided for a contractor to provide a reason as to why they believe the item has been disallowed in error, and to provide a contact email address. Once a challenge is successfully submitted, the information is sent directly to the NHSBSA Helpdesk to action.

Contractors wishing to challenge any disallowed items that are received through the post, can contact the NHSBSA Helpdesk



(0300 330 1349) or email nhsbsa.prescriptionservices@nhsbsa.nhs.uk for further advice.

If a disallowed item is successfully challenged, NHSBSA will reimburse the item and any payment adjustments will be reflected in the next Schedule of Payments.

If a pharmacy contractor remains unsatisfied with outcome of a disallowed item challenge, they can **email PSNC's Dispensing & Supply team** for further advice on the matter.

Top tips to avoid disallowed items

- **Ensure systems are kept up to date** – to reduce the risks of users inadvertently prescribing/dispensing products that have recently been amended/deleted from the Drug Tariff and or dm+d, users should ensure their systems are kept up to date. PSNC recommends that EPS suppliers synchronise to the dm+d and Drug Tariff changes frequently (note that the dm+d is updated weekly by the NHSBSA). Where in doubt, pharmacy staff should check the latest **online Drug Tariff** or search the **NHS Dictionary of medicines and devices (dm+d)** to confirm if an item will be passed for payment.
- **Establish nature of product** – check if the drug (medicinal or non-medicinal substance including food supplements or cosmetic items) is permitted on the NHS or is the appliance (medical device) listed in Part IX of the Drug Tariff.
 - **Drugs:** A drug is only allowed if it is NOT listed in Part XVIII (Drugs, Medicines and Other Substances that may not be ordered under the NHS) of the Drug Tariff.
 - **Appliances:** The presence of a CE mark, (normally found on the outer packaging, information leaflet, or on the device itself) indicates that a product is an appliance. Only devices listed under the Appliances section in Part IX (Parts IXA, IXB and IXC) of the Drug Tariff are allowed on NHS prescriptions.
- **Check prescriber type/qualification** – does the prescriber hold relevant registration(s) to issue prescriptions for the items ordered? Some prescribers are restricted by their qualifications to prescribe certain products only.
- **Are the prescribed items listed in the relevant prescriber's formulary?** – if the prescription is issued by a Community Nurse Prescriber or Dentist, check that the item is listed in the Nurse Prescribers' Formulary or Dental Practitioners' Formulary, respectively.
- **Is the product prescribed on a valid NHS form?** – pharmacy staff must check if the prescribed product has been prescribed on a valid NHS form. Form types can be identified by the code on the bottom right of a paper prescription form.
- **Prescriber endorsements** – check if the prescriber has annotated the prescription with the correct endorsements.
- **Follow correct end of month sorting and submission processes** – EPS tokens for non-payment should not be mixed in with paper prescriptions submitted for payment each month. Pharmacy teams are reminded that only tokens used to claim for supplies made against SSPs should be placed in the red separator.

If a pharmacy contractor identifies a prescription for a disallowed item, it should not be dispensed. Instead, the prescription cancellation process should be followed, and the prescriber should be alerted so that an alternative product permitted on the NHS can be considered.