

Questions:

1. Please can the Department of Health supply the value of VPAS monies received for calendar years 2019, 2020, 2021, or if the data is held by financial year, financial years 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25.
2. How much of the VPAS monies received by the Department of Health in calendar years 2019, 2020, 2021, or if the data is held by financial year, financial years 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 has been allocated to medicines (in absolute and as a % of total VPAS monies received by the Department of Health)?
3. Does the Department of Health treat VPAS monies allocated to the Department of Health as recurrent or non-recurrent?

Responses:

Please note that VPAS (Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access) was a 5-year voluntary scheme that operated from 2019, which was succeeded by VPAG (Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing, Access, and Growth) from 2024. Our responses have been provided assuming your request sought information in regards to VPAS, and any successor scheme.

1. I would direct you to the information below in response:
 - 2019/20: £38m
 - 2020/21: £25m
 - 2021/22: £24m
 - 2022/23: £71m
 - 2023/24: £101m
 - 2024/25: £92m to date (Pending final confirmation from Department of Health and Social Care - DHSC).
2. When the rebate monies are received, the value is logged against overall drug related expenditure, effectively reducing the net spend in this area, however the receipts are not considered as ringfenced for solely drug related expenditure purposes.

For clarity, if the level of rebate received brought the net drug expenditure to lower than the budget available for drug expenditure, the resulting 'surplus'/budgetary underspend would be available for use generally in the Health and Social Care (HSC) sector in NI.

Similarly, if the level of rebate was low and net drugs expenditure was therefore higher than the budget available, the resultant 'deficit' within drugs expenditure would have to be covered by other measures within HSC NI.

In that context, an assessment of the percentage of NI income used solely against drug expenditure is as follows (rounded to nearest £million and whole percentage):

- 2019/20: £31m / 82%
- 2020/21: £24m / 98%
- 2021/22: £22m / 93%
- 2022/23: £64m / 90%

- 2023/24: £99m / 98%
- 2024/25: £92m / 100%

3. I can advise that NI VPAS monies are considered as non-recurrent.

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