

SABA PMOS measure from 2025/26 to roll over into 2026/27 scheme

The 2025/26 Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Scheme (PMOS) asked practices to reduce the number of patients with asthma prescribed 6 or more short-acting beta-agonist (SABA) inhalers in 12 months by 50%, with a view to switching to anti-inflammatory reliever (AIR) or maintenance and reliever therapy (MART) in line with the latest NICE guidelines, where appropriate.

In the later months of the 2025/26 financial year many patients who are eligible for review may have already received 6 or more SABA devices and as such could count against their practice in the final search result which looks at the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. We do not want your work in moving patients to AIR and MART to go unrecognised.

For that reason, this measure is being rolled over into the 2026/27 scheme to allow practices to maximise their potential payment by:

- accounting for patients who had already been prescribed 6 or more SABA at the time of review
- giving practices the option to undertake additional work in 2026/27 to achieve full payment

The total payment that can be earned across both years is the same as the maximum possible payment for 2025/26. The baseline, target reduction and payment per listed patient will remain the same.

For an example practice whose initial search for the 2025/26 PMOS identified 200 patients the scheme requests a reduction of 50%, to 100 patients:

Baseline	31 March 2026 result	2025/26 payment	31 March 2027 result	2026/27 payment	Total proportion of full payment earned
200	100	100%	N/A	N/A	100%
200	150	50%	100	50%	100%
200	160	40%	100	60%	100%
200	180	20%	160	20%	40%

Should any practices wish to devote resource to improving this measure we would encourage doing so as soon as possible to avoid patients receiving 6 SABA in 2026/27 before they can be reviewed. Local guidance on the choice of device(s) for patients aged 5 to 11 years, and for patients aged 12 years and over, are available on the [joint formulary](#).

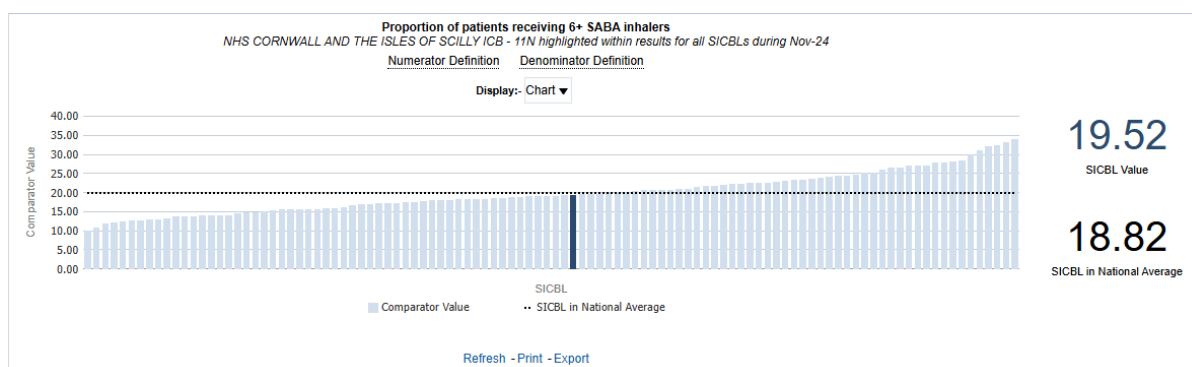
A copy of the guidance from the 2025-26 PMOS is included below. Searches including a new final position search for use on or after 31 March 2027 will be available on the [joint formulary](#). Practices are asked to report their final position by Friday 16 April 2027.

Reducing the number of patients with asthma prescribed 6 or more SABA inhalers in 12 months

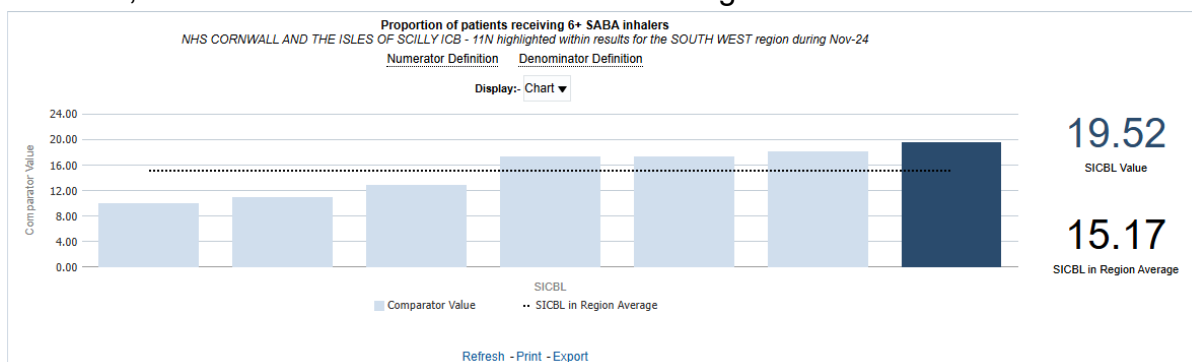
Practices are asked to reduce the number of patients with asthma who are prescribed 6 or more short-acting beta agonist (SABA) inhalers in 12 months by 50%.

Background

The NHS BSA respiratory dashboard includes data on the proportion of patients receiving 6 or more SABA inhalers from ICB down to practice level. In November 2024, Cornwall was just under the national average:



However, we are well above the South West average:



It is worth noting that as prescribing data does not include an indication, the NHS BSA dashboard attempts to exclude COPD patients by only including those who have also been issued a preventer but not an antimuscarinic. These values are useful for comparison purposes but not for precise measurement.

Multiple studies have shown that over-reliance on SABA inhalers is associated with more frequent and more severe exacerbations as well as a greater risk of mortality, incrementally increasing relative to the number of SABA inhalers used in a year.

One definition of uncontrolled asthma is the need for a reliever inhaler 3 or more times a week, equating to no more than 2 of the most commonly prescribed 200-dose devices per year. Given the substantial numbers in this cohort, this activity asks

practices to review those using 6 or more SABA per year as they are at the greatest risk.

Supporting information

- The latest [NICE, BTS, and SIGN pharmacological management guidelines for patients aged 12 years and over](#) do not include SABA at any stage of the pathway.
- People with [uncontrolled asthma](#) who are on the treatment pathway recommended by previous NICE and BTS/SIGN guidelines can be moved to the new pathway as per the flowchart linked above.
- Local guidance for this cohort including formulary choice of devices is available on the [joint formulary](#).
- The [recommendations for children aged 5 to 11 years](#) still include SABA where appropriate, but the use of 6 or more devices in 12 months falls firmly into the definition of uncontrolled asthma.

Measurement

Due to the limitations of the NHS BSA dashboard, clinical system searches will be provided to ensure data quality.

- The medicines optimisation team will provide a baseline search that is backdated to 31 October 2024 so that practices already working to adopt the new national guidelines are not disadvantaged. The number of patients identified should be submitted on the PMOS signup form.
- Practices may run the current 12-months search at any time to view their progress in this measure and identify patients for review.
- Practices are asked to submit their final position to ciosicb.prescribing@nhs.net using the final search dated 31 March 2026 as provided.

Recommendation

- Search the clinical system to identify patients with asthma prescribed 6 or more SABA inhalers in the previous 12 months.
- For patients aged 12 years and over, review and transfer to the new guidelines (AIR or MART) where possible.
 - If the patient cannot or will not be transferred to AIR or MART, consider replacing any pMDI SABA with a DPI to reduce carbon footprint.
- For patients under 12, review alongside the new guidelines and add or adjust preventer therapy as necessary.
- Ensure that an updated [asthma action plan](#) is provided.
- Where a steroid pMDI is issued, ensure that an appropriate spacer is available to the patient.
 - Spacers should be replaced at least annually.

Patients to be excluded

- Patients who also have a diagnosis of COPD
- Patients with brittle asthma

References and resources

[Asthma: diagnosis, monitoring and chronic asthma management \(BTS, NICE, SIGN\) \[NG245\]](#)

[NICE, BTS & SIGN: Pharmacological management in people aged 12 and over](#)

[NICE, BTS & SIGN: pharmacological management of asthma in children aged 5 to 11 years](#)

[Asthma + Lung UK: MART action plans](#)

[Asthma + Lung UK: AIR action plans](#)

[Asthma + Lung UK: Child action plan \(for ages 6 to 11\)](#)

[Asthma control test](#) – a validated symptom measure that can be used with or without peak flow monitoring to aid diagnosis and assess the impact of asthma symptoms on patients' lives.

[RightBreathe](#) – information on inhalers including technique videos and spacer licensing and compatibility.