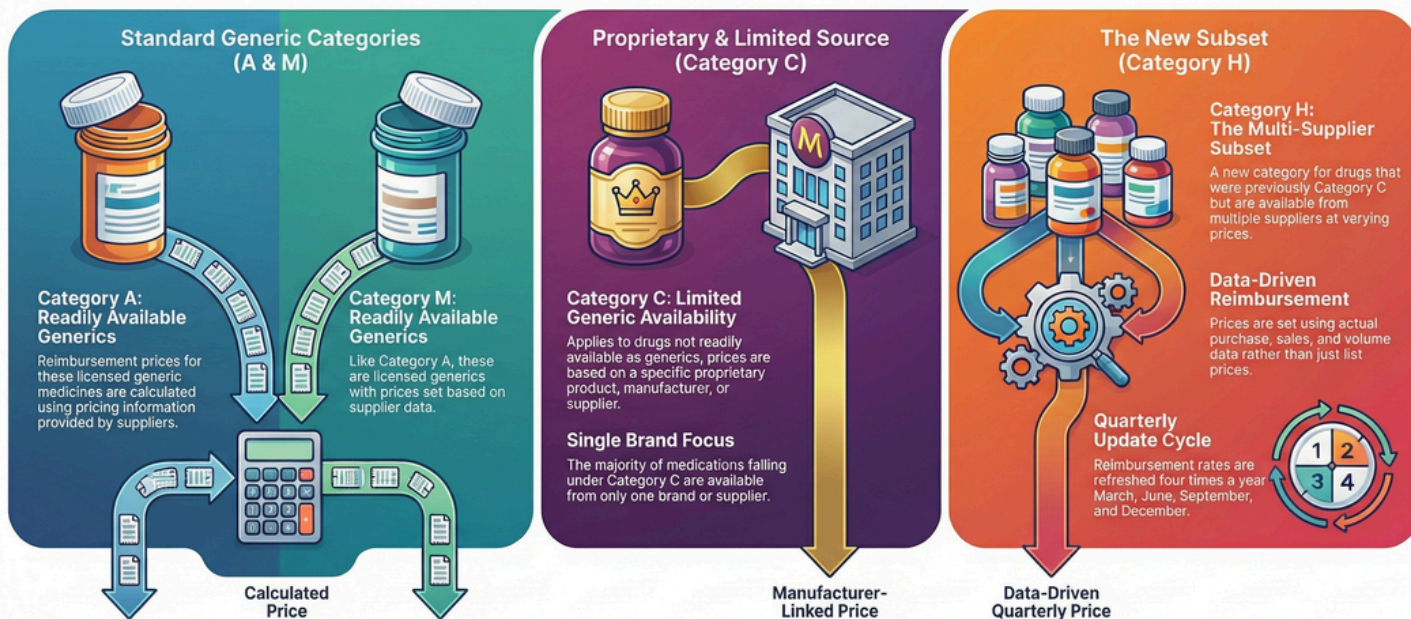


Decoding the Drug Tariff: A Guide to Reimbursement Categories



The DHSC announced the introduction of a new Category in the Drug Tariff from 1 March 2026. Someone must have been watching too much Line of Duty and decided to call it Category H.

The premise behind Category H is to reduce the overall NHS drug costs. Unfortunately, the unintended consequences might only become apparent when more pharmacies (and some dispensaries – hopefully no Dispex members) will have to cease trading and therefore reduce patient choice and convenience.

Categories A, M, C and now H:

Category A - Drugs which are readily available as licensed generic medicines. Reimbursement prices are set using information (prices) from suppliers.

Category M - Drugs which are readily available as licensed generic medicines. Reimbursement prices are set using information (prices) from suppliers

Category C - Drugs which are not readily available as a generic, where the price is based on a particular proprietary product, manufacturer or, as the case may be, supplier.

Category H - A subset of Category C drugs with multiple suppliers will be listed in a new category, Category H, in Part VIIIA of the Drug Tariff. The majority of Category C drugs only have one brand or supplier, however, some drugs in Category C are available from multiple suppliers, at different prices if prescribed by brand. DHSC will set reimbursement prices for Category H drugs using actual purchase, sales, and volume data and will be updated quarterly in the following months: March, June, September and December.

The following 11 products have moved from Category C to Category H from March 2026:

Cinchocaine 5mg / Hydrocortisone 5mg suppositories
Doxazosin 4mg modified-release tablets
 Etodolac 600mg modified-release tablets
Isosorbide mononitrate 25mg modified-release capsules
 Nicotine 4mg medicated chewing gum sugar free
Omeprazole 10mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets
 Omeprazole 20mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets
Omeprazole 40mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets
 Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 60mg tablets
Ursodeoxycholic acid 500mg tablets
 Verapamil 120mg modified-release tablets

Working with e-CASS, when the Category H products are ordered on the e-CASS order portal as a generic, it will show the Category H price, as well as the prices of all brands available, minus their discount, thus allowing e-CASS users to select the most profitable product.

Dispex will be publishing the Category H lists on our NEW **Category H Updates** section on our **website**. At the bottom of the Category H Update page we have published Dispex Insights (A members-only resource), using e-CASS ordering portal data, which identifies the most cost-effective purchasing options, be that a particular brand, a parallel imports or a generic. This will allow you to buy better and ensure you minimise losses. Additionally, members can now visit our new **Category C page** to access a list identifying the most profitable brand to order against GENERICALLY prescribed Category C products.

Unfortunately, PSUK is not currently a supplier on e-CASS, so PSUK prices (minus any discounts) will not be available to compare. Dispensaries using e-CASS will not need to worry about which product to order, as e-CASS automatically lists the most cost-effective at the top and many dispensaries default to that in their ordering cascade. This only applies when searching for the Category H products using the generic name.

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The following Brands are available to be ordered against the Category H generic products:

Category H Generics March 2026	Brands Available according to DM+D
Cinchocaine 5mg / Hydrocortisone 5mg suppositories 12	Proctosedyl suppositories 12
Cinchocaine 5mg / Hydrocortisone 5mg suppositories 12	Uniroid HC suppositories 12
Doxazosin 4mg modified-release tablets 28	Cardura XL 4mg tablets 28
Doxazosin 4mg modified-release tablets 28	Doxadura XL 4mg tablets 28
Doxazosin 4mg modified-release tablets 28	Raporsin XL 4mg tablets 28
Etodolac 600mg modified-release tablets 30	Lodine SR 600mg tablets 30
Etodolac 600mg modified-release tablets 30	Etopan XL 600mg tablets 30
Isosorbide mononitrate 25mg modified-release capsules 28	Elantan LA25 capsules 28
Isosorbide mononitrate 25mg modified-release capsules 28	Isodur 25XL capsules 28
Nicotine 4mg medicated chewing gum sugar free 96 piece	Nicotinell Fruit 4mg medicated chewing gum 96
Nicotine 4mg medicated chewing gum sugar free 96 piece	Nicotinell Mint 4mg medicated chewing gum 96
Nicotine 4mg medicated chewing gum sugar free 96 piece	Galpharm Nicotine Replace 4mg medicated chewing gum 96
Omeprazole 10mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets 28	Losec MUPS 10mg gastro-resistant tablets 28
Omeprazole 10mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets 28	Mezzopram 10mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets 28
Omeprazole 20mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets 28	Mezzopram 20mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets 28
Omeprazole 20mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets	Losec MUPS 20mg gastro-resistant tablets 28
Omeprazole 40mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets 7	Mezzopram 40mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets 7
Omeprazole 40mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets 7	Losec MUPS 40mg gastro-resistant tablets 7
Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 60mg tablets 12	Sudafed Decongestant 60mg tablets 12
Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 60mg tablets 12	Care Decongestant 60mg tablets 12
Ursodeoxycholic acid 500mg tablets 100	Ursofalk 500mg tablets 100
Ursodeoxycholic acid 500mg tablets 100	Ursonorm 500mg tablets 100
Verapamil 240mg modified-release tablets 28	Vera-Til SR 240mg tablets (Tillomed Laboratories Ltd) 28
Verapamil 240mg modified-release tablets 28	Vera-Til SR 240mg tablets (Accord-UK Ltd) 28
Verapamil 240mg modified-release tablets 28	Securon SR 240mg tablets 28

In the first tranche of Category H drugs the price differential between the different brands is sometimes minimal and so the Category H prices are not much different from the previous Category C prices, except for Ursodeoxycholic acid 500mg tablets x 100 and Nicotine 4mg chewing gum in a 96-pack size only. Note that the 105 and 210 pack sizes for Nicotine chewing gum have been deleted from the Drug Tariff from 1 March 2026.

Category H generics	Feb Cat C price	March Cat H price	Increase/Decrease in Price
Cinchocaine 5mg / Hydrocortisone 5mg suppositories 12	5.08	4.13	-0.95
Doxazosin 4mg modified-release tablets 28	5.00	5.24	0.24
Etodolac 600mg modified-release tablets 30	15.50	15.56	0.06
Isosorbide mononitrate 25mg modified-release capsules 28	4.22	5.53	1.31
Nicotine 4mg medicated chewing gum sugar free 96 piece	13.57	10.18	-3.39
Omeprazole 10mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets 28	9.30	9.44	0.14
Omeprazole 20mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets 28	13.92	14.04	0.12
Omeprazole 40mg dispersible gastro-resistant tablets 7	6.96	6.92	-0.04
Pseudoephedrine hydrochloride 60mg tablets 12	3.00	3.02	0.02
Ursodeoxycholic acid 500mg tablets 100	80.00	69.07	-10.93
Verapamil 240mg modified-release tablets 28	5.55	7.67	2.12

It is our expectation that now the first list of Category H products has been revealed and there are some increases in price and some decreases in price when compared to the Category C price, the DHSC will look at many more Category C products, the majority of which will most probably decrease in price, at the same time as having a detrimental effect on the potential margin that dispensaries can currently achieve. Dispex is currently developing a list of Category C drugs which potentially enhance margins when prescribed generically and the most cost-effective brand/generic is ordered.