

Developing a pharmacotherapy dashboard in Edinburgh City health and social care partnership

Background

The south-east Edinburgh pharmacotherapy hub provides medicines reconciliation support to multiple practices. As the hub expanded to support additional practices in the locality, the team agreed they needed to accurately capture the distribution of workload between the hub and practice teams, as well as turnaround time.

The hub's objectives are to:

- undertake medicine reconciliation of immediate discharge letters (IDL) within the Scottish Patient Safety Programme's (SPSP) recommended 48-hour time frame and outpatient letters (OPL) within five working days
- provide practices with consistent pharmacotherapy support to process IDLs and OPLs, and
- release practice pharmacy teams to provide more advanced pharmacotherapy support to the practices.

Aim

The south-east Edinburgh pharmacotherapy hub aimed to develop a dashboard to help assess whether the hub was meeting its objectives, including:

- the proportion of IDLs and OPLs processed by the hub and individual practice pharmacy teams, and
- turnaround times for processing IDLs and OPLs.

Activity

Inspiration was drawn from the Midlothian pharmacotherapy hub who had collaborated with the Public Health Scotland Local Intelligence Support Team (LIST) to develop a local IDL dashboard. The south-east Edinburgh team approached LIST to develop a similar dashboard.

A range of stakeholders were included in the development of the dashboard, including LIST, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, pharmacists, lead general practitioners (GPs), and project managers supporting the hub expansion.

Agreement was obtained from practices for data extraction and publication of dashboard data. Collaboration with NHS Lothian general medical services facilitators allowed for extraction of relevant data from Docman (a clinical management system used in primary care).

While developing the dashboard, the team addressed several challenges around data.

- **Gaps in the data:** LIST worked with the lead pharmacists to establish guidance around the use of standard texts used in Docman. This allowed for data around clinical letter completion times and proportion of work completed by the hub and the individual practices to be extracted.
- **Data deletion issues:** LIST coordinated with one practice to extract relevant information before it was deleted due to data storage limitations.

Impact

The dashboard has given the pharmacotherapy team an improved understanding of hub and practice activity. It allows them to assess their service delivery with the hub's objectives and show any regular variations in capacity each month. Features of the dashboard include:

- IDL and OPL workload distribution
- IDL and OPL turnaround time, and
- number of IDLs and OPLs received and completed by the day of the week.

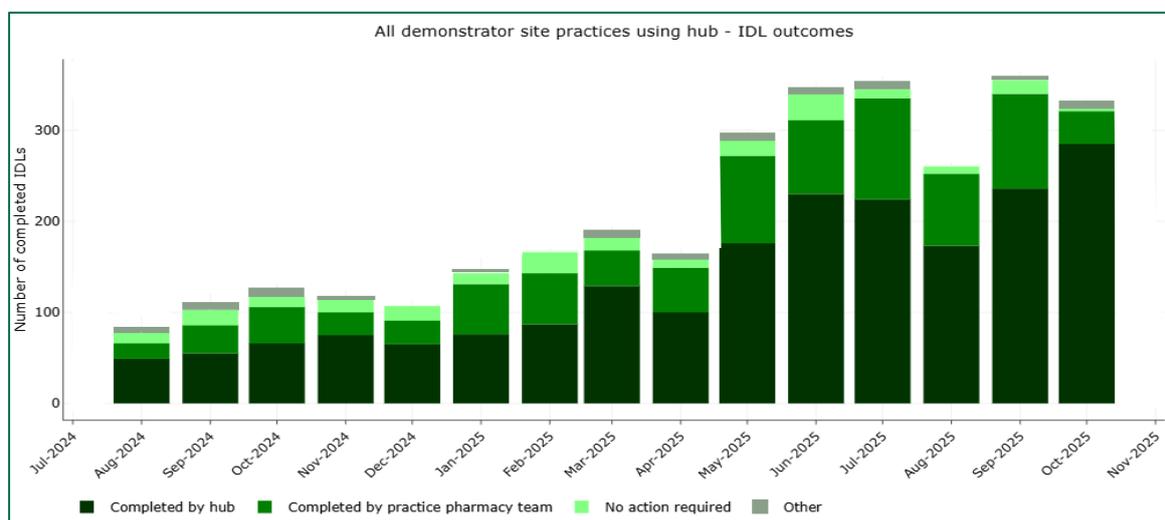
IDL and OPL workload distribution

Figure 1 demonstrates the monthly count of completed IDLs, categorised into completion by the hub and the practice pharmacy team. This allows the team to assess workload across the hub and practice teams, providing more insight into resource allocation. The 'no action required' count includes items reviewed by the pharmacy team and coded as not requiring further action, and 'other' includes items completed by another clinician or not coded as completed by pharmacy.

The chart shows that the monthly number of IDLs completed has increased over time. This is largely due to new practices joining the hub at different times throughout the year. Other factors including recruitment of technicians, completion of training plans, and improving processes have also contributed to this increase.

The same chart can be produced for a monthly count of completed OPLs.

Figure 1: the number of completed IDLs per month for all demonstrator site practices using the hub from August 2024 to October 2025.



IDL turnaround time

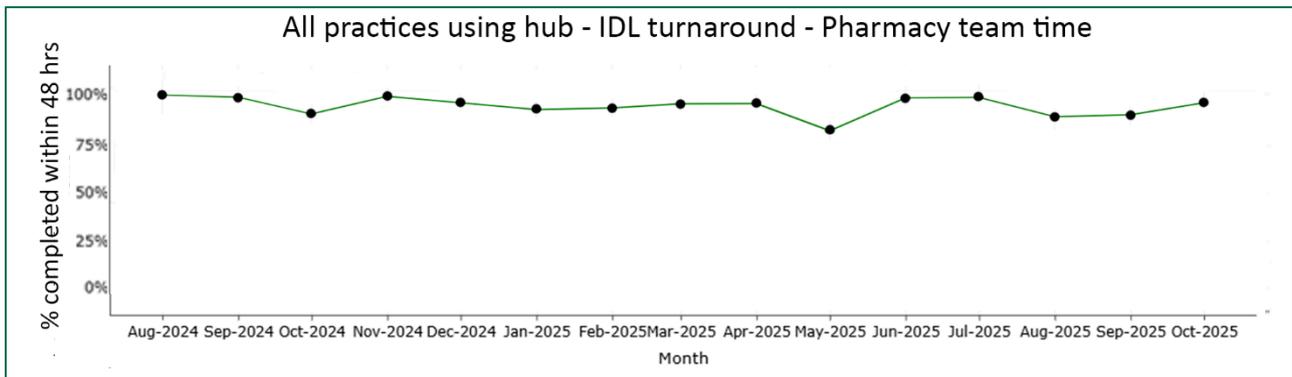
The dashboard monitors two key stages of IDL processing, allowing the pharmacy team to monitor trends over time and investigate any variations in processing times. These stages are:

- the total processing time: from when an IDL is first added into Docman by practice admin to when it is marked as complete in Docman, and
- the pharmacy team processing time: from when the IDL is assigned to the pharmacy team to when it is marked as complete in Docman.

While capturing the *total processing time* is valuable in understanding the full duration of post-discharge actions to be completed, the pharmacy team is only responsible for a portion of this process. Extracting *pharmacy team processing time* separately allowed them to evaluate their team's efficiency in more detail.

Figure 2 displays the percentage of IDLs processed by the pharmacy team within 48 hours, allowing the team to clearly assess their turnaround time with the SPSP recommendation. Figure 2 shows that for most of the year, the pharmacotherapy team maintained the process of over 90% of IDLs within 48 hours. The same data can be applied to OPLs, which have a recommended five-day turnaround.

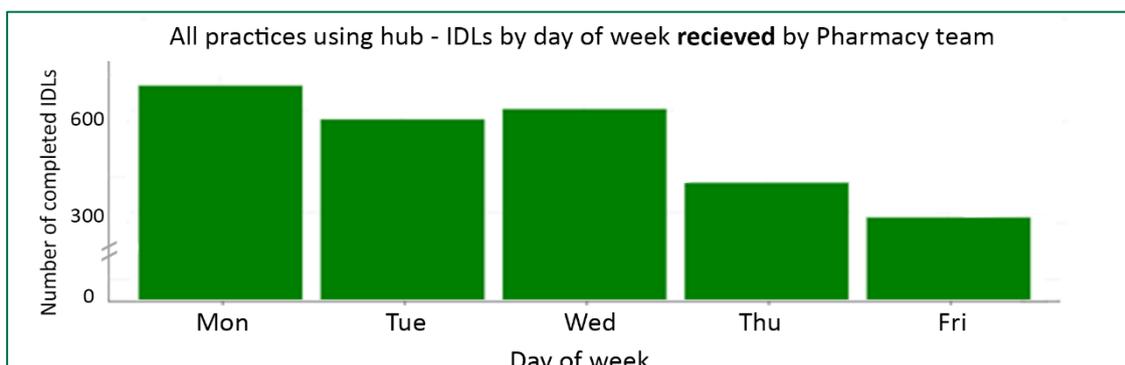
Figure 2: The percentage of IDLs completed by the pharmacy team within 48 hours for all demonstrator site practices using the hub between August 2024 and October 2025.



Day of the week monitoring

The dashboard also displays the number of IDLs received and completed by day of the week across all practices and for individual practices. Figure 3 shows an example of the cumulative number of IDLs received by the pharmacy team for each day of the week. This data can be used to inform decisions on staffing levels and resource allocation.

Figure 3: The number of IDLs the pharmacy team received by day of the week.



Key learnings

The dashboard enabled the team to assess demand across individual hub practices in comparison with others, which supported fair and balanced staff allocation. It also helped the team identify practices that may require additional support with administrative processes to ensure letters were allocated to pharmacy appropriately.

A pharmacy technician highlighted that:

'The dashboard helps with allocating workstreams between colleagues and has been a positive resource to improve efficiency and safety of actioning letters in a timely manner for patients.'

The lead pharmacist in the hub has described the dashboard as *'highly valuable'*, noting:

'The dashboard has been used to discuss hub input at individual practice meetings and at GP cluster meetings.'

Next steps

- Individual practice data will be shared directly with each practice to support transparency and engagement.
- There is also an opportunity for the pharmacotherapy team to use the dashboard data for collaboration with practices to improve workflow processes.
- The south-east Edinburgh pharmacotherapy team will continue to use the dashboard to monitor turnaround times and the proportion of IDLs and OPLs processed by the hub and practice teams.
- The team will roll out the dashboard to additional practices within the locality, with the aim of scaling across the wider city.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership for sharing your improvement journey with Healthcare Improvement Scotland as part of the Primary Care Phased Investment Programme.

The work presented in this resource was funded, either fully or in part, by Scottish Government as part of the Primary Care Phased Investment Programme (2023-2025)

© Healthcare Improvement Scotland 2026

Published | March 2026

This document is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International Licence. This allows for the copy and redistribution of this document as long as Healthcare Improvement Scotland is fully acknowledged and given credit. The material must not be remixed, transformed or built upon in any way. To view a copy of this licence, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

www.healthcareimprovementscotland.scot