BEYOND THE PRESCRIPTION - SCOTLAND, 2024-2025

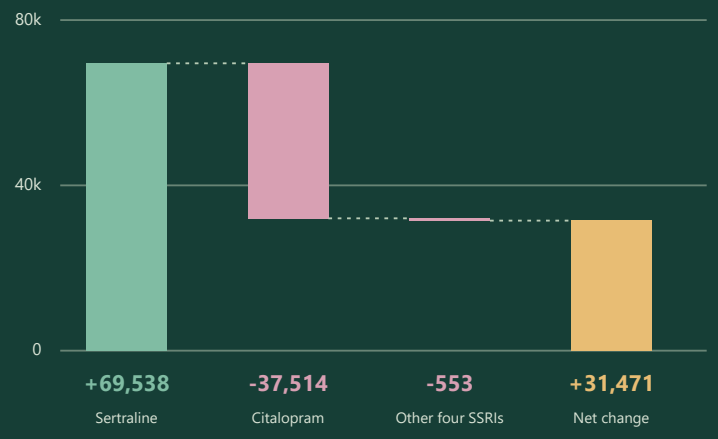
A small rise. A consistent change.

SSRI items rose by 0.8% in 2025. Sertraline increased and citalopram decreased in all 14 territorial dispensing areas.

4,187,571 SSRI items in 2024 to 4,219,042 in 2025. Items are not people, diagnoses or treatment switches.

HOW THE CHANGES ADD UP

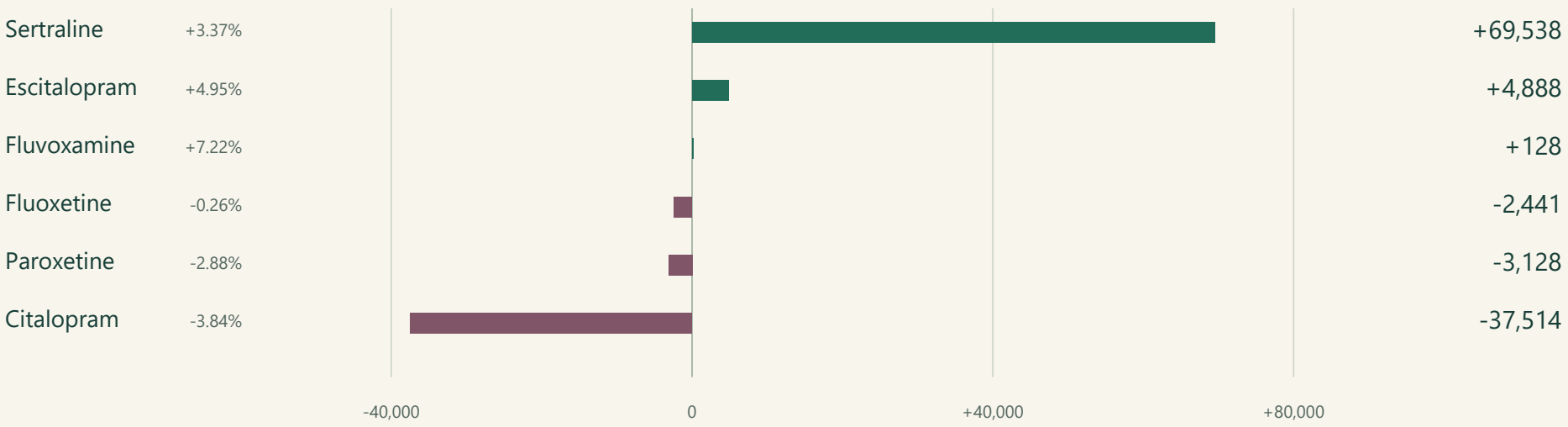
2025 minus 2024 - items



OUR ANALYSIS - SIX SSRI MEDICINES

Two opposing changes dominate

Sertraline +69,538; citalopram -37,514; other four SSRIs combined -553 items.

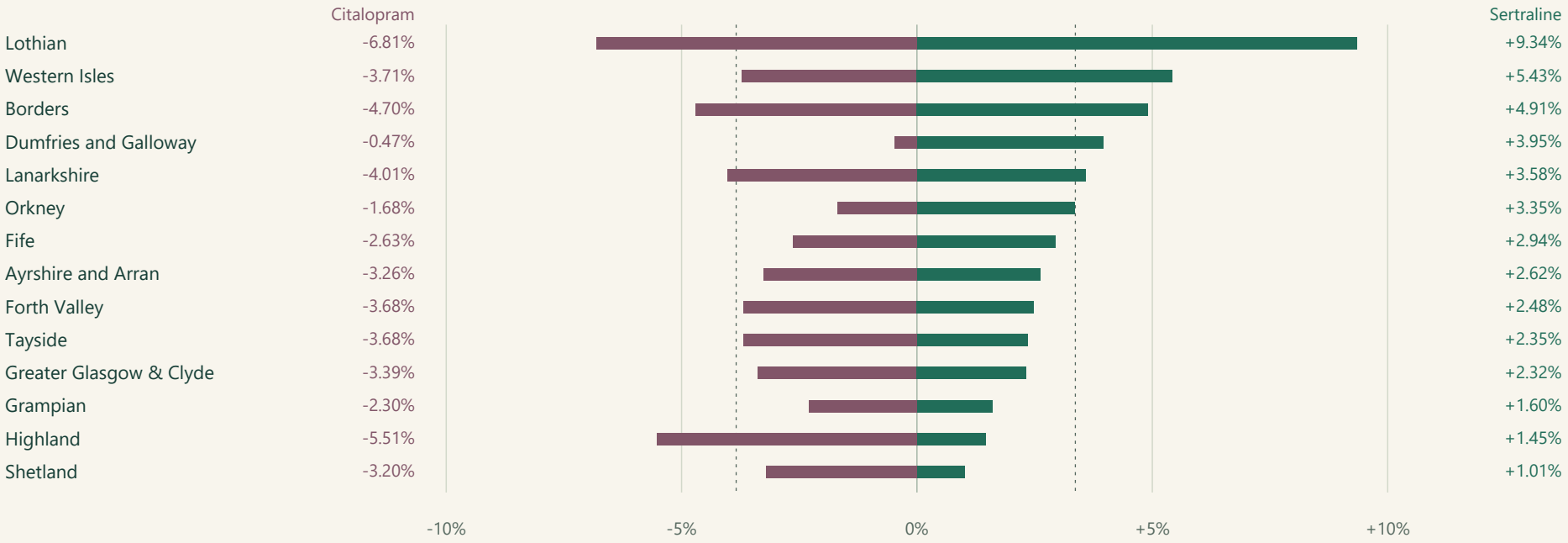


Change in items, 2025 minus 2024. Fixed scale for all medicines. Percentages use each medicine's 2024 base.

FULL-YEAR ITEM COUNTS - TERRITORIAL DISPENSING AREAS

Opposite directions in all 14 areas

Different sizes of change. Each medicine uses its own 2024 count. Fixed -10% to +10% scale.



Area medians: sertraline +2.78%, citalopram -3.53%. Dashed lines: Scotland (+3.37%, -3.84%). The directions survive 168/168 and 167/168 matched-month omissions, respectively. Effect sizes and robustness lead the web story; exploratory tests are in its methods.

A CLOSER LOOK - LOTHIAN

30.9% of sertraline's rise

11.1% of 2024 sertraline items

Lothian contributed 21,464 of Scotland's 69,538 additional sertraline items. It held 229,831 of Scotland's 2,066,436 sertraline items in 2024. These distinct denominators show an uneven contribution, not a cause or a difference in care quality.

Use the pattern to ask a better local question

Compare your area with Scotland. Check percentages alongside item counts. Ask prescribing teams whether indications, new starts, continuing treatment or prescription intervals could explain the differences.

Dispensing location is not patient residence. No individual records are linked. Strengths, quantities, intervals, indications and outcomes cannot be inferred from item counts. Full methods, exact counts and explanatory limits are in the web story.

Data: PHS community dispensing records

Competition extract and challenge

Interactive story, exact values and source notes

Review edition 6 - 6 November 2026 - Independent analysis - Open Government Licence.

AI assisted analysis, writing and design/code. No clinical endorsement or competition submission.