

---

## **SUMMARY**

### **Summary of Report 1/2022, relating to a comparative analysis of service delivery by primary healthcare units, year 2018**

*Barcelona, 30 March 2022*

The Public Audit Office for Catalonia has issued Report 1/2022, relating to its comparative analysis of service delivery by primary healthcare units (PHUs) in year 2018, in fulfilment of its Annual Programme of Activities.

The report, which was presented by the Chairman, Mr Jaume Amat, was approved by a majority of the Audit Office Board at its meeting on 8 February 2022.

The purpose of the assignment was to analyse the performance of primary healthcare delivery units, to compare the results achieved by the different organisations and legal entities running them, and to highlight the main differences, if any, that showed up from the user satisfaction surveys.

To carry out the comparative analysis the Audit Office selected, at the auditor's discretion, a sample of thirty-three PHUs throughout the territory of Catalonia.

The most significant findings from the audit carried out, as given in section 3 of the report, can be summarised as follows:

- Of the total figure of €1,398.68m contracted out by the Catalan Health Service (CatSalut) in year 2018 for the delivery of primary healthcare services throughout Catalonia, €1,154.31m involved cooperation agreements signed with public sector entities and the remaining €244.37m consisted of contracts with public sector entities (56.3%) and private ones (43.7%).

At the close of year 2018 total recognised expenditures reported in the budget outturns for CatSalut and the Catalan Health Institute (ICS) deriving from contracts for running the delivery of primary healthcare services came to €1,371.95m (€299.54m for CatSalut and €1,072.41m for the ICS).

- The service delivery organisations showing the highest performance level in meeting their objectives were limited companies (over 90%), whereas public sector consortia, foundations and public law entities had performance levels of between 80% and 90%. Six of the units in the sample were assessed as having performance levels for meeting objectives linked to actual service delivery of below 80%. Two were run by private entities and the remaining four by publicly owned ones.

- For the entities in the sample, in year 2018 the result of the financial co-responsibility clause for managing pharmaceutical dispensing was an overall negative figure of minus €255,665, because pharmaceutical expenditure was above the annual amount that had been allocated. For the combined total of all PHUs in Catalonia run by non-ICS service delivery providers, the net result for this clause in year 2018 was also negative, at minus €618,043. The healthcare regions of Barcelona – North Metropolitan Area and Tarragona Plain had the most negative balances.
- As regards the oversight to be carried out by CatSalut, in accordance with the stipulations in the contracts with the service delivery awardee entities, the Audit Office concluded that no formal monitoring arrangements covering all service providers existed and the documentation produced showed weaknesses in terms of verifying fulfilment of the requirements laid down in the contracts and tender specifications.
- According to the report by the Catalan Agency for Healthcare Quality and Assessment corresponding to year 2018, the population of Catalonia had a total of 45,047,556 primary healthcare visits, an average of six visits per person.

For the sample analysed, the population assigned to these PHUs in 2018 consisted of 754,886 individuals. They made a total of 4,314,439 visits to the primary healthcare facilities. The PHUs with the highest primary healthcare user frequencies were Peralada, Sant Adrià de Besòs 2 – La Mina, and La Seu d’Urgell. These had averages of between eight and nine visits for each person assigned to them. The units with the least utilised services were Barcelona 5C – Sarrià and Barcelona 5E – Sant Gervasi with averages of around three visits per person.

- According to results from the Satisfaction Survey Plan, in year 2018 CatSalut beneficiaries treated at primary healthcare facilities gave the service a score of 7.9 out of 10. As regards aspects needing improvement, those surveyed indicated the waiting time for phone calls, how easy it was to get a particular appointment day, punctuality, and getting seen outside normal hours.
- Using the data obtained for the PHUs in the selected sample, various effectiveness and efficiency indicators were analysed for the service providers:
  - The contract price for each person assigned to the PHUs in the sample ranged from €100.03 for the Barcelona 5C – Sarrià PHU, to €328.05 for the Santa Coloma de Queralt PHU.
  - For the PHUs in the sample, the contract price for primary healthcare and specific programmes in relation to the assigned population was inversely proportional to the number of employees at each PHU, the opposite of what one would expect. The socio-economic index for the PHUs’ assigned population was not a determining factor for contract pricing. But territorial factors were. These included not just the socio-economic index but also the age weighting and geographical dispersion of the assigned population.

- Pharmaceutical expenditures were inversely proportional to the prescription quality index for the PHUs analysed, and correlated directly with the number of prescriptions. The PHU with the best results for pharmacy prescriptions was Vic 2 – South which, with an expenditure figure of €191.8 per user, had issued an average of 19.7 prescriptions per user. The worst results were for the Manresa 1 PHU, with a pharmacy expenditure of €369.2 per user and an average of 29.5 prescriptions per user.
- The number of visits per employee at the PHUs worked out at average of 2,500 visits per annum. A larger financial contribution per inhabitant did not imply greater PHU efficiency. The PHUs run by private entities had more uneven results in the number of visits per employee.

The highest number of visits handled by the units in the sample corresponded to Rural Lleida 1 – North PHU, with 4,120 visits per employee. The lowest figure was for Barcelona 5C – Sarrià PHU, with just 1,511. In general, the entities run by public sector service providers were the ones that achieved the highest efficiency ratios.

This summary is solely for information purposes. The audit report (in Catalan and Spanish) can be consulted at [www.sindicatura.cat](http://www.sindicatura.cat).