# Healthcare industry – Best practices for descriptions

## Trade Item Description and associated descriptive attributes

In the National Product Catalogue the 'trade item description' is an important attribute and the cross industry best practice is to construct it as follows: 'Brand Name' + Sub-Brand' + 'Functional Name' + 'Variant Description' + 'Net Content (+ UoM)' (where applicable).

A range of healthcare data recipients rely on accurate and consistent population of the descriptive attributes 'Brand Name', 'Sub-Brand', 'Functional Name' and 'Variant Description' to provide ***unambiguous and full product descriptions***. This allows the flexibility to use individual attributes or combinations of attributes for varied description and search function requirements.

## Useful tips to ensure high quality descriptions

The standard definitions of these attributes can be found in the Data Dictionary (or 'Cookbook')

**Functional Name:** is what the product is and how it is used. For example: a 'Dressing' could either be a 'Wound Dressing' or a 'Salad Dressing'. Use enough detail to avoid confusion. Keep in mind that your Functional Name should fit within 35 characters, and that you are not allowed to use abbreviations.

**Variant Description:** the variant description field can contain multiple characteristics of an item, as well as abbreviations, with a maximum length of 35 characters. Example: a product that is Extra Large, coloured Dark-Blue and is 55 mm long could have the following variant description: 'XL Dark-Blue Length 55 mm'. Keep in mind that the Net Content of an item should not be entered in the Variant Description but in the 'Net Content (+ UoM)' field. For example, '100 ml' cannot be the variant description of a syrup but is the net content instead.

**Sub-Brand:** this component is often over-looked but is required when applicable. A sub-brand may be a registered trademark and should not be entered in the Functional Name field. If we take the iPhone as an example, 'iPhone' should be the Sub-Brand (and 'Apple' the Brand Name), and 'Smartphone' the Functional Name; even though in common language we refer to this product as an 'iPhone', which might lead some people to thinking it is acceptable as the Functional Name.

## Example of Bad Practice

| Data attribute | Example data | What's wrong? |
|---|---|---|
| Brand Name | Iris Scissors | This is not the brand name. |
| Sub-Brand | 25 mm | This is unlikely to be a sub-brand. |
| Functional Name e.g. #1 | Brando 25 mm | The brand name should not be part of the functional name.<br>This does not imply what the product is or how it should be used. |
| Functional Name e.g. #2 | Medical Equipment | This is too general. |
| Variant Description e.g. #1 | Scissors 3 Pack | This is unlikely to be a variant description and seems too general (it seems like it should be part of the 'functional name').<br>"3 Pack" is probably the 'net content' which should not be included within the variant description. |
| Variant Description e.g. #2 | To be used in conjunction with product Z33. Please dispose of carefully in Hazmat container. | This is too long and detailed for a variant description. It seems more likely to be 'Additional Trade Item Description' data. |
| Net Content + UoM (1) | 3 Pieces | "Pieces" is not a valid code. Use "1N" for a count. |
| Trade Item Description | Brndo Scissors 1 EA | Do not use abbreviations. "Brando" not "Brndo".<br>This is not descriptive enough.<br> If the net content is only one then omit "1 EA" from the end of the description |

## Example of Good Practice

| Data attribute | Example data | Why |
|---|---|---|
| **Brand Name** | **Brando** | This is the brand of the product. |
| **Sub-Brand** | **Supalite** | This is a sub-brand associated with the "Brando" products and appears on the packaging. Note: Sub-Brand can be left blank |
| **Functional Name** | **Iris Scissors** | This is what the product is, with how it is used. Note: "Scissors" is too general and could be confused with general office scissors |
| **Variant Description** | **Sterile 25 mm Straight Blades** | This is used to distinguish between similar products e.g. if there also exists a similar product with "Sterile 40 mm straight blades" then the Variant Description is used to distinguish between the two. Note: Variant Description can left blank. |
| **Net Content + UoM (1)** | **3 1N** | There are 3 pairs (or counts) of scissors in the pack. |
| **Trade Item Description** | **Brando Supalite Iris Scissors Sterile 25 mm Straight Blades 3 Pack** | This is a made by combining 'Brand Name' + 'Sub- Brand' + 'Functional Name' + 'Variant Description' + 'Net Content (+UoM)' |