

Dispensing Factsheet: Exemptions from the prescription charge

Our Dispensing and Supply Team guides you through the categories of exemptions from the NHS prescription charge and the proof required for each.

Eligible reasons for exemption

Exemption category	Who is exempt?	Proof required	How to apply for exemption
A. Under 16 years of age	Children under 16 years of age	Birth certificate, passport or medical card Please note: Prescriptions with computer-generated dates of birth (DOB) do not require proof of age.	N/A
B. Full-time students aged 16, 17 or 18	Must be aged 16, 17 or 18 and in full-time education from an establishment such as a school, college or university or similar, such as home tutored. Please note: Apprenticeships are not eligible. (However, patients may qualify for a HC2 certificate under the NHS Low Income Scheme tinyurl.com/ybal3auu)	Proof of age can be found on a child benefit award letter, or birth certificate /passport/medical card and proof they are a full-time student can be obtained from the patient's school, college, university or local education authority (LEA).	N/A
C. 60 years of age or over	Any patient who is 60 years of age or over.	Birth certificate, passport or medical card Please note: Prescriptions with computer-generated DOB do not require proof of age.	N/A
D. Maternity Exemption	Expectant mothers and those who have given birth to a child (including a still-born child) in the last 12 months.	Possession of a valid Maternity Exemption (MATEX) certificate. Please note: Prescription Services are currently trialing digital maternity exemption certificates. Pharmacies may be presented with one of the following types of exemption certificate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital certificate • Printed copy of the certificate • Plastic exemption card More information can be found on the Prescription Services website tinyurl.com/y70lj84w	Patient must complete a FW8 form available from GPs, midwives or health visitors. These professionals then sign the form and send it off to Prescription Services who then issue a certificate. Maternity exemption certificate helpline: 0300 330 1341
E. Medical Exemption	Patients with certain medical conditions or physical disability as listed in Part XVI of the Drug Tariff tinyurl.com/ycpw9m78	Possession of a valid Medical Exemption Certificate. Please note: Patients with qualifying conditions alone are not entitled to exemption without a valid certificate.	Patients must complete an FP92A form available from GPs. The GP will then send the form to Prescription Services who will issue a certificate. Medical exemption certificate helpline: 0300 330 1341
F. Prescription Pre-payment Certificate (PPC)	Patients in possession of a valid PPC at the point of dispensing. Please note: A PPC is valid for either 3 months or 12 months, depending on the type of PPC purchased.	Possession of a valid PPC. Please note: Prescription Services are working to phase out plastic cards and move towards digital certificates for PPCs. For more information see our website tinyurl.com/ybuh8ye2	Patients can complete an FP95 form, available from pharmacies and purchase in store (for pharmacies registered to sell PCCs) or via post (postage details can be found on the FP95). Patients can also purchase a PPC online from Prescription Services tinyurl.com/ybqfhap or by contacting the PPC helpline 0300 330 1341

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G. War Pension Exemption	Patients holding a War Pension Exemption Certificate and the prescription is for their accepted disablement.	Possession of a War Pension Exemption Certificate.	Patients can write to: The Treatment Group, Veterans UK, Norcross, Thornton-Cleveleys, FY5 3WP Veterans UK helpline: 0808 1914 218
L. HC2 Charges Certificate	Anyone qualifying for full help with health costs through the NHS Low Income Scheme tinyurl.com/ybal3auu	Possession of a valid HC2 Charges Certificate. Please note: A partner and dependent children under 19 years named on the claim will also be entitled to free prescriptions while the certificate is valid.	Patients must complete the HC1 form, available from Jobcentre Plus Office, forms may also be available from pharmacies, NHS hospitals, dentist, optician or GP surgery. Pharmacies can obtain HC1 forms from PCSE via their online portal. tinyurl.com/ybkrwtm6 NHS Low Income Scheme helpline: 0300 330 1343
X. Free-of-charge contraceptives	Patients in possession of a prescription for a contraceptive substance(s) and/or listed contraceptive appliances for women (as referenced in Part XVI Clause 10 of the Drug Tariff tinyurl.com/ycpw9m78) prescribed on FP10 or any of its variants.	No charge is payable for contraceptive substances and listed contraceptive appliances for women (as referenced in Part XVI Clause 10 of the Drug Tariff tinyurl.com/ycpw9m78) prescribed on FP10 or any of its variants. Please note: Prescriptions for any other drug not included in the list of contraceptive drugs to be dispensed free of charge must be annotated by the prescriber with 'CC', 'CU', 'OC' or the female symbol ♀. In the absence of such an endorsement by the prescriber and where the patient does not have another valid exemption, the normal prescription charge will apply to that item.	N/A
H. Income Support (IS) OR Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	Patients in receipt of IS or those included in (this could be the partner of or any dependent young people under 20) an award for IS. Patients in receipt of income-based ESA or those included in an award for ESA - this could be the partner of or any dependent young people under 20.	Possession of an IS award notice Possession of an ESA award notice	Patients can speak to their Jobcentre Plus Office or contact Jobcentre Plus helpline: 0800 169 0310 Patients can speak to their Jobcentre Plus Office or contact Jobcentre Plus helpline: 0800 169 0310
K. Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) OR Universal Credit (UC)	Patients in receipt of income-based JSA or those included in an award for JSA - this could be the partner of or any dependent young people under 20. Patients in receipt of UC. Please note: UC does not automatically entitle patients to help with their health costs. To qualify, patients must be included in a UC award and their earnings during their most recent assessment period must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £435 or less • £935 or less if their UC includes an element for either a child or limited capability for work 'Most recent assessment period' means the assessment period that ended immediately before the date a patient claims a free NHS prescription. It runs for a calendar month.	Possession of a JSA award notice Possession of a Universal Credit statement. Please note: Patients should tick the box K for 'income-based JSA' on the patient declaration until the prescription form is updated to include an exemption category for UC.	Patients can speak to their Jobcentre Plus Office or contact the Jobcentre Plus helpline: 0800 169 0310 Patients can apply online via the GOV.UK website tinyurl.com/khunvvu or contact the Universal Credit full service: 0800 328 5644 Universal Credit live service: 0800 328 9344



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M. NHS Tax Credit Exemption	<p>Patients (including any partner and/or young person(s) included in the claim) receiving tax credits, who have been sent 'NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate' by Prescription Services.</p> <p>Please note: To be entitled to a Tax Credit Exemption certificate, the patient and their partner (if applicable) must: have a combined annual income for Tax Credit assessment purposes of £15,276 or less, and; be in receipt of Child Tax Credit and/or receive a disability element of Working Tax Credit*</p> <p>*Receiving Working Tax Credit alone (no disability element included) does not entitle patients to help with health costs, regardless of their annual income.</p>	<p>Possession of a valid NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate.</p> <p>Please note: Prescription Services are working to phase out plastic cards and move towards digital certificates. In the interim pharmacies may be presented with one of the following types of exemption certificate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double-sided A4 paper certificates • Plastic exemption cards <p>For more information see our website tinyurl.com/ybuh8ye2</p>	<p>Certificates are automatically issued to eligible patients.</p> <p>Tax Credit helpline: 0345 300 3900</p>
S. Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) paid on its own, or Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit with Savings Credit)	Patients or their partners in receipt of PCGC.	Possession of a PCGC award notice.	<p>Patients can speak to their Jobcentre Plus Office.</p> <p>Pension Service helpline: 0800 731 0469</p>
Other exempted persons/categories			
Prisoners on Release	Prisoners on release and those released from secure accommodation (e.g. courts, training areas or children's home) who present an FP10 or FP10(MDA) with the letters 'HMP' computer printed in the practice address box.	<p>The letters 'HMP', the prison/secure accommodation address, contact number, prescribing code and cost centre code must be computer printed in the box provided for the practice address.</p> <p>Please note: if the above is handwritten, it cannot be accepted as automatically exempt.</p> <p>If the necessary information is on the prescription then the patient is classed as automatically exempt and does not need to sign or tick the declaration on the back of the form.</p>	N/A

Ineligible reasons for exemption

Those in receipt of the following benefits are **not** eligible to claim for exemption from prescription charges in England:

- Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance paid on its own;
- Pension Credit (Savings Credit), paid on its own;
- HC3 certificate for limited help with health costs;
- Any benefit paid on its own and not listed on the back of a prescription (such as Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Incapacity benefit); and

- Asylum seekers – instead supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) who will automatically send an NHS Low Income Scheme HC2 certificate entitling them to help with health costs including free prescriptions. Alternatively, patients can apply for support using the HC1 application form.

For a full list of benefits that do not entitle patients to exemption from the prescription charge see Prescription Services website tinyurl.com/ybunwhcm.

'Check Before You Tick' campaign

During September 2018, a new nationwide campaign, 'Check Before You Tick', will be launched to help patients understand their eligibility for free NHS prescriptions, and to highlight the possible consequences of making an incorrect claim.

NHS England will be posting a toolkit of materials to pharmacies to help prompt patients and offer guidance.

Community pharmacy contractors and their teams already play a key role in the prescription exemption checking process, but further information and resources which may help with this campaign are available from ow.ly/Narj30loFmD