

Dispensing Factsheet: Exemptions from the prescription charge

Our Dispensing and Supply Team guides you through the categories of exemptions from the NHS prescription charges and the evidence required to prove entitlement to free NHS prescription.

Form-level exemption category (applies to all items)	Who is exempt?	Evidence of entitlement	How to obtain exemption
A. is 60 years of age or over or is under 16 years of age <i>EPS code 0002</i>	Patients of 60 years of age or over and patients of 16 years of age or under.	Birth certificate, passport or medical card. Please note: Patients over 60 years or under 16 years with a printed date of birth on the prescription do not need to provide any proof of age or make a declaration on the reverse of the form.	N/A
B. is 16, 17 or 18 and in full time education <i>EPS code 0003</i>	Patients aged 16, 17 or 18 and in full-time education from an establishment such as a school, college, or university or similar, including home tutoring. Please note: Apprenticeships are not eligible. (However, patients may qualify for a HC2 certificate under the NHS Low Income Scheme	Proof of age can be found on a child benefit award letter, birth certificate, passport or 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
D. Maternity exemption certificate <i>EPS code 0005</i>	Expectant mothers or those who have given birth in the previous 12 months are exempt from NHS prescription charge if they are in possession of a valid Maternity Exemption (MATEX) certificate. Patients who have had a miscarriage, abortion/termination of pregnancy or stillborn birth can continue to claim free NHS prescriptions using their MATEX certificate until it expires.	Possession of a valid Maternity Exemption (MATEX) certificate. Pharmacies may be presented with one of the following types of MATEX certificates: • Digital certificate • Paper certificate More information can be found on the NHS Help with Health Costs website . NHSBSA has an exemption checking service to allow individuals to check if they hold a valid MATEX certificate.	Midwives, practice nurses or health visitors can register online with NHSBSA to issue MATEX certificates on behalf of new or expectant mothers. Once approved, using a smartphone or tablet device, mothers can present their digital MATEX certificate sent to their registered email address, or bring a printed hard copy of their certificate to the pharmacy. For more information on MATEX certificates patients can speak to NHS Help with Health Costs: 0300 330 1341
E. Medical exemption certificate <i>EPS code 0006</i>	Patients with certain medical condition/s or physical disability as listed in Part XVI of the Drug Tariff and are in possession of a valid medical exemption certificate.	Possession of a valid medical exemption certificate. NHSBSA has an exemption checking service to allow individuals to check if they hold a valid medical exemption certificate.	Patients must complete an FP92A form available from GPs. The GP will then send the form to NHS Help with Health Costs who will issue a certificate. For more information on medical exemption certificates patients can speak to NHS Help with Health Costs: 0300 330 1341
F. Prescription prepayment certificate (PPC) <i>EPS code 0007</i>	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. Pharmacies may be presented with one of the following types of PPCs. • Digital certificate • Paper certificate Click here for more information on PPCs . NHSBSA has an exemption checking service to allow individuals to check if they hold a valid PPC.	Patients can purchase a digital PPC • Online from NHS Help with Health Costs • From a pharmacy registered to sell PPCs • By contacting PPC helpline on 0300 330 1341

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G. Prescription exemption certificate issued by Ministry of Defence <i>EPS code 0008</i>	Patients holding a War Pensioner exemption certificate and possess an NHS prescription for items prescribed for their accepted disablement.	Possession of a War Pension exemption certificate. Please note: Prescribers are requested to split items between forms into items prescribed for their accepted disablement and those that are not; this so that only those items for the accepted disablement are provided without a prescription charge.	For an up to date War Pension certificate, war pensioners can contact: Veterans UK helpline: 0808 1914 218, or write to: Veterans UK Ministry of Defence Norcross Thornton Cleveleys FY5 3WP
L. HC2 (full help) certificate <i>EPS code 0009</i>	Patients who have applied for full help with health costs through the NHS Low Income Scheme and are in possession of a valid HC2 certificate. Please note: A partner named on a HC2 certificate and any dependent children (under 19 years of age and in full-time education) who normally live in the same household as the person with a valid HC2 certificate will also be entitled to free prescriptions while the certificate is valid. Names of any dependents are not printed on the HC2 certificate, therefore the holder of certificate may need to provide evidence of a dependent's entitlement to help with health costs, such as a Child Benefit or Child Tax Credit letter.	Possession of a valid HC2 certificate. The NHSBSA has an exemption checking service to allow individuals to check if they hold a HC2 certificate. Please note: Possession of a HC3 certificate (partial help with health costs) does not provide any help towards the costs of NHS prescriptions.	Patients must complete the HC1 form, available from pharmacies, Jobcentres, GP practices and Citizens Advice. Patients can also download and print the HC1 forms from NHS Help with Health Costs website or can order the forms by contacting the NHS Low Income Scheme helpline: 0300 330 1343 Pharmacies can obtain HC1 forms from PCSE via their online portal. NHSBSA are trialling a new online NHS Low Income Scheme application process for patients who do not have capital/savings of over £6,000 and who must be either: a pensioner, earning a wage, receiving state benefits or living in a care home
H. Income Support (IS) OR Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) <i>EPS code 0011</i>	Patients who get or are included in an award of someone receiving Income Support. This includes partners (including civil partners) or any dependents under the age of 20 Patients who get or are included in an award of someone receiving Income-related Employment Support Allowance (ESA). This includes partners (including civil partners) or dependents under the age of 20 of patients in receipt of Income-related ESA.	Possession of an Income Support award notice or letter. Possession of an Income Related Employment and Support Allowance award notice or letter. Please note: Possession of contribution-based ESA, paid on its own, does provide any help towards the costs of NHS prescriptions.	Patients can check online if they are eligible for Income Support and apply by contacting the Jobcentre Plus helpline: 0800 169 0350 Patients can download and complete application form for Income-related ESA or make a claim by contacting the Jobcentre Plus helpline: 0800 169 0350
K. Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) <i>EPS code 0012</i>	Patients in receipt of income-based JSA or those included in an award for JSA – this could be the partner of or any dependent under 20.	Possession of a JSA award notice Please note: Possession of contribution-based JSA, paid on its own, does provide any help towards the costs of NHS prescriptions.	Patients can check online if they are eligible for Income-based JSA and apply by contacting the Jobcentre Plus helpline: 0800 055 6688
M. Tax Credit exemption certificate <i>EPS code 0013</i>	Patients (including any partners and any dependent children included in their tax credit claim) with an annual family income used to calculate Tax Credits of £15,276 or less and receive either: • Child Tax Credit • Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit paid together • Working Tax Credit including a disability or severe disability element will automatically be sent an NHS Tax Credit exemption certificate by NHSBSA.	Possession of a valid NHS Tax Credit exemption certificate (presented as a double-sided A4 paper certificate) or Tax Credits award notice. Certificates are valid for up to 7 months. If a patient is still entitled, he/she will be sent a new certificate before their current one expires. The NHSBSA has an exemption checking service to allow individuals to check if they hold a valid Tax Credit exemption certificate.	There is no need for patients to apply for this exemption. If eligibility conditions are met, HM Revenue and Customs will inform NHSBSA who will automatically issue NHS Tax Credit exemption certificates to eligible patients. For more information on NHS Tax Credit exemption certificates patients can speak to NHS Help with Health Costs: 0345 300 3900

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S. Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (including partners) <i>EPS code 0014</i>	Patients and their partners in receipt of Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) paid on its own, or Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit with Savings Credit).	Possession of a Patient Credit Guarantee Credit award letter. Please note: Possession of Pension Credit (Savings Credit), paid on its own, does provide any help towards the costs of NHS prescriptions.	Patients can apply online or speak to the Pension Credit claim line: 0800 731 0469
U. Universal Credit and meets the criteria <i>EPS code 0015</i>	Patients in receipt of Universal Credit, and in their most recent assessment period have earnings of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £435 or less • £935 or less if their Universal Credit includes an element for a child, or if the patient has limited capability for work and work-related activity. <p>The 'most recent assessment period' runs for a calendar month from the date of the Universal Credit claim.</p>	Possession of a Universal Credit award notice or statement. Please note: Entitlement to free prescriptions is dependent on the patient's earnings for the most recent assessment period. For couples, the earning limit applies to the joint income of the patient and their partner.	Patients can check if they are eligible and apply online for Universal Credit or contact the Universal Credit helpline: 0800 328 5644

Free-of-charge (FOC) items (Item-level exemption)

Was prescribed free-of-charge contraceptives <i>EPS code 0010</i>	Patients in possession of an NHS prescription for drugs and/or appliances used for contraceptive purposes as listed in Part XVI and Part IXA of the Drug Tariff, respectively. For drugs not listed in the Part XVI of the Drug Tariff (for example Dianette), prescribers must endorse the item with the 'CC', 'OC' or the female symbol '♀' to indicate if the item is for contraceptive purposes to ensure that it is treated as a FOC item by NHSBSA.	N/A	N/A
Was prescribed free-of-charge sexual health medication <i>EPS code 0017</i>	Patients in possession of an NHS prescription for an item endorsed by the prescriber with initials 'FS' to indicate free supply of sexual health treatment.	N/A	N/A

Other exempted persons/categories

Prisoners on Release <i>EPS code 0015</i>	Released prisoners and those released from secure accommodation (secure training centre or secure children's home) can get their medicines for free against FP10 or FP10MDA prescriptions until they can arrange to see their GP or register with a new GP.	Possession of a valid FP10 or FP10MDA prescription with the following information printed in the box provided for the practice address on the front of the form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The letters 'HMP' • Prison or secure accommodation name and address • Telephone number • Prescribing code and cost centre code (if applicable) <p>If the information above is included on the form, the patient is classed as automatically exempt and does not need to sign the declaration but should print their name and address if their address is different from the front of the form or token.</p>	N/A
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Ineligible reasons for exemption

Any allowance or benefit paid on its own and not listed on the reverse of a prescription form is ineligible for exemption from prescription charges. For example: Incapacity benefit; Housing benefit and Carer's allowance.

Read more on exemptions from the prescription charge at: psnc.org.uk/exemptions