

# Dispensing Factsheet: Exemptions from the prescription charge

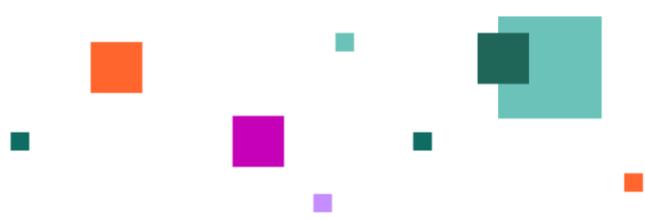
This factsheet serves as a guide of the categories of exemption from NHS prescription charges and provides details of the evidence required to prove entitlement to free NHS prescriptions, where applicable. A patient's exemption status applies at the time of dispensing.

**Please note:** Patients are not required to make a signed declaration if the prescription has been confirmed as exempt by the [Real Time Exemption Checking \(RTEC\)](#) system.

Prescription charge exemption category (form v.0522) (EPS code)	Who is exempt?	Evidence of entitlement	How to obtain exemption
<b>A. is 60 years of age or over or is under 16 years of age (unless the date of birth is printed on the form)</b> <i>EPS code 0002</i>	Patients of 60 years of age or over and patients under 16 years of age.	Where a computer-generated date of birth is <u>not present</u> proof of age should be provided e.g. driving license, passport or birth certificate.	N/A
<b>B. is 16, 17 or 18 and in full time education</b> <i>EPS code 0003</i>	Patients aged 16, 17 or 18 <b>and in full-time</b> education from an establishment such as a school, college, university or home tutoring etc. <b>Note:</b> Apprenticeships are not eligible. (However, patient may qualify for a HC2 (see L.)).	Proof of age e.g. on a named child benefit award letter, passport or birth certificate. Proof to confirm that a patient is in full-time education may be accepted, for e.g. student card or letter from school/college.	N/A
<b>D. Maternity exemption certificate</b> <i>EPS code 0005</i>	Expectant mothers or those who have given birth in the last 12 months and are in possession of a valid maternity exemption (MATEX) certificate.  Patients in possession of a valid MATEX who have had a miscarriage, stillborn birth or an abortion/termination can continue to use their MATEX certificate until it expires.	Possession of a valid digital or paper MATEX.  <b>Note:</b> Patients who are pregnant or have given birth in the last 12 months without a valid MATEX are <u>not</u> entitled to free NHS prescriptions.  NHSBSA has an <a href="#">exemption checking service</a> to allow individuals to check if they hold a valid MATEX.	Doctors, midwives or health visitors can apply <a href="#">online</a> or by submitting an <a href="#">FW8 application form</a> . The FW8 must be signed by both the patient and healthcare provider. Completed <a href="#">original</a> FW8 must be sent to: NHS Business Services Authority Maternity Exemption Certificates Bridge House 152 Pilgrim Street Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6SN  For more information on MATEX patients can speak to <b>NHS Help with Health Costs: 0300 330 1341</b> .
<b>E. Medical exemption certificate</b>	Patients with certain medical condition(s) or physical	Possession of a valid medical exemption certificate.	Patients should speak to their GP or doctor who will

Prescription charge exemption category (form v.0522) (EPS code)	Who is exempt?	Evidence of entitlement	How to obtain exemption
<i>EPS code 0006</i>	disability as listed in Part XVI of the <a href="#">Drug Tariff</a> in possession of a valid medical exemption certificate.	<b>Note:</b> Patients with qualifying condition(s) without a valid medical exemption certificate are <u>not</u> entitled to free NHS prescriptions. NHSBSA has an <a href="#">exemption checking service</a> to allow individuals to check if they hold a valid medical exemption certificate.	complete and submit an FP92A. Practitioners can order FP92A application forms and return envelopes <a href="#">from the Primary Care Support England portal</a> .  For more information on medical exemption certificates patients can speak to <b>NHS Help with Health Costs: 0300 330 1341</b> .
<b>F. Prescription prepayment certificate</b> <i>EPS code 0007</i>	Patients in possession of a valid prescription prepayment certificate (PPC) at the point of dispensing.  <b>Note:</b> A PPC can be valid for either 3 months or 12 months, depending on the type of PPC purchased.	Possession of a valid digital or paper PPC.  NHSBSA has an <a href="#">exemption checking service</a> to allow individuals to check if they hold a valid PPC.	Patients can purchase a PPC: <a href="#">Online</a> from NHS Help with Health Costs By contacting the <b>PPC helpline</b> on 0300 330 1341 From a pharmacy registered to sell PPCs.
<b>W. HRT only prescription prepayment certificate</b> <i>EPS code 0020</i>	Patients in possession of a valid HRT prescription prepayment certificate (HRT PPC).  <b>Note:</b> HRT PPC's are valid for 12 months.	Possession of a valid digital or paper HRT PPC.	Patients can purchase a PPC: <a href="#">Online</a> from NHS Help with Health Costs. By contacting the <b>HRT PPC helpline</b> on 0300 330 2089. From a pharmacy registered to sell PPCs.
<b>G. Prescription exemption certificate issued by Ministry of Defence</b> <i>EPS code 0008</i>	Patients holding a valid war pension exemption certificate and in possession of an NHS prescription for items prescribed for their accepted disablement.	Possession of a war pension exemption certificate.  <b>Note:</b> Items prescribed for the accepted disablement should be issued on a separate form from those that are not.	A war pension exemption certificate can be obtained from Veterans UK:  <b>Helpline:</b> 0808 1914 218 <b>Address:</b> The Treatment Group, Veterans UK, Ministry of Defence, Norcross, Thornton, Cleveleys FY5 3WP
<b>L. HC2 (full help) certificate</b> <i>EPS code 0009</i>	Patients in possession of a valid HC2 certificate.  <b>Note:</b> Partners and any dependent children under 19 named on the claim will also be entitled to free NHS prescriptions while the	Possession of a valid HC2 certificate.  Partners and any dependent children under 19 named on the claim can check the NHSBSA <a href="#">exemption checking service</a> to check if they are eligible to claim	Patients must complete the HC1 form, available from pharmacies, Jobcentres, GP practices and Citizens Advice. Pharmacies can obtain HC1 forms from <a href="#">PCSE</a> via their online portal.

Prescription charge exemption category (form v.0522) (EPS code)	Who is exempt?	Evidence of entitlement	How to obtain exemption
	certificate is valid. The names of any dependents are not printed on the HC2 certificate.	exemption from prescription charges.	HC1 forms can also be downloaded for printing or ordered from <a href="#">NHS Help with Health Costs</a> website. <b>NHS Low Income Scheme helpline:</b> 0300 330 1343. Patients meeting certain criteria can apply <a href="#">online</a> .
<b>H. Income Support</b> <b>(Note: Income Support will cease to be a valid prescription charge exemption category after 14 April 2026)</b>  OR  <b>Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)</b> <b>Income-related ESA continues to be a valid prescription charge exemption category</b> <i>EPS code 0011</i>	<b>Income Support</b> has been abolished by the Department for Work and Pension (DWP) from April 2026. For more information see our <a href="#">website</a> .  <b>Income-related Employment and Support Allowance</b> – Patients who get or are included in an award for Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Partners (including civil partners) or any dependent under 20 included in an award are also entitled to receive free NHS prescriptions.	<b>Income Support</b> – Prescriptions <b>dispensed on or before the 14 April 2026 may still be claimed after 15th April 2026</b> with evidence of a valid Income Support award notice on the date of dispensing.  <b>Income-related Employment and Support Allowance</b> – Possession of a valid Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) award notice or letter.	<b>Income Support</b> – Patients can no longer make a new claim for Income Support.  The removal of the Income Support exemption category forms part of the ongoing migration of legacy benefits to Universal Credit. For more information see <a href="http://gov.uk/income-support">gov.uk/income-support</a> .  <b>Income-related ESA</b> – Patients could get Universal Credit at the same time or instead of New Style ESA. Patients can check if they are eligible for <a href="#">Universal Credit</a> and/or <a href="#">New Style Employment and Support Allowance</a> .
<b>K. Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)</b> <b>Note: Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance will cease to be a valid prescription charge exemption category after 14 April 2026</b> <i>EPS code 0012</i>	Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance has been abolished by the Department for Work and Pension (DWP) from April 2026. For more information see our <a href="#">website</a> .	Prescriptions <b>dispensed on or before the 14 April 2026 may still be claimed with this exemption reason after 15th April 2026</b> with evidence of a valid JSA award notice on the date of dispensing.	Patients can no longer apply for income-based JSA. Instead, they can check if they are eligible for <a href="#">Universal Credit</a> and/or <a href="#">New Style JSA</a> . The removal of the Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance exemption category forms part of the ongoing migration of legacy benefits to Universal Credit. For more information see <a href="http://gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance/if-youre-getting-income-based-jsa">gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance/if-youre-getting-income-based-jsa</a>
<b>M. Tax Credit exemption certificate</b> <b>Note: Tax credit certificate ceased to be</b>	Tax credit certificates have been abolished by the Department for Work and Pension (DWP) from April 2025.	N/A	The removal of the Tax Credit exemption category forms part of the ongoing migration



Prescription charge exemption category (form v.0522) (EPS code)	Who is exempt?	Evidence of entitlement	How to obtain exemption
<b>a valid prescription charge exemption category in April 2025</b> EPS code 0013	For more information see our <a href="#">website</a> .		of legacy benefits to Universal Credit. To continue to be entitled to free NHS prescriptions, patients must qualify under another valid exemption reason. Check <a href="#">NHSBSA website</a> .
<b>S. Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (including partners)</b> EPS code 0014	Patients and their partners in receipt of Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) paid on its own, or with Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) with Savings Credit. <b>Note:</b> Patients receiving Pension Credit Savings Credit on its own, are not entitled to exemption but may be entitled through the <a href="#">Low Income Scheme</a> .	Possession of a Patient Credit Guarantee Credit award letter.	Patients can apply <a href="#">online</a> or speak to the <b>Pension Credit claim line:</b> 0800 99 1234
<b>U. Universal Credit <u>and</u> meets the criteria</b> EPS code 0016	Patients in receipt of Universal Credit, and in their most recent assessment period have earnings of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £435 or less</li> <li>• £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.</li> </ul> The 'most recent assessment period' runs for a calendar month from the date of the Universal Credit claim.	Possession of a Universal Credit award notice or statement. <b>Note:</b> Being in receipt of, or named on an award of, Universal Credit <u>does not</u> automatically entitle patients to help with their health costs. 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 <a href="#">online</a> for Universal Credit or contact the <b>Universal Credit helpline:</b> 0800 328 5644.

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

Prescription charge exemption category (form v.0522) (EPS code)	Who is exempt?
<b>Was prescribed free-of-charge contraceptives</b> EPS code 0010	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.  For drugs not listed in the Part XVI of the Drug Tariff e.g. Dianette, prescribers must endorse the item(s) with the 'CC', 'OC' or the female symbol '♀' to indicate the item was prescribed for contraceptive use and should be treated as a free-of-charge.
<b>Free supply for specified use</b> (previously 'Was prescribed free-of-charge sexual health')	The prescriber 'FS' endorsement enables free supply of items prescribed for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)</li> <li>• management of tuberculosis (TB) latent TB infections</li> </ul>

<i>medication')</i> <i>EPS code 0017</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>management of the effects of TB the adverse effects from TB treatment</li> </ul> <p>Patients in possession of an NHS prescription with an item correctly endorsed 'FS' by the prescriber to indicate that any STI/TB item(s) are to be provided free-of-charge to the patient. See our 'FS' factsheet <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
---	--

Other exempted persons/categories		
Prescription charge exemption category (form v.0522) (EPS code)	Who is exempt?	Evidence of entitlement
<b>Prisoners on Release</b> <i>EPS code 0015</i>	<p>Released prisoners and those released from secure accommodation (secure training centre or secure children's home) in possession of a valid HM prison-issued FP10 or FP10MDA are automatically exempt from prescription charges. For more information see our <a href="#">webpage</a>.</p>	<p>Possession of a valid HM prison-issued FP10 or FP10MDA containing the following information printed in the practice address section:</p> <p>The letters '<b>HMP</b>'/'<b>YOI</b>' (Young Offenders Institution)</p> <p>Prison or secure accommodation name and address</p> <p>Telephone number</p> <p>Prescribing code and cost centre code (if applicable).</p> <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 (or 'no fixed abode') if their address is different from the front of the form or token.</p>

#### Patient requirements

Pharmacy teams are in no way responsible for the accuracy of a patient's declaration; this remains the responsibility of the patient. If a patient is unsure whether they are entitled to free prescriptions, pharmacy staff should advise the patient to pay for their prescription and provide them with an FP57 Refund form with information on how to claim a refund at a later date. Further information for patients can be found at [nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check-if-youre-eligible-help](https://nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check-if-youre-eligible-help).

#### Further information

For more information see our 'Exemptions from the prescription charge' page at: [cpe.org.uk/exemptions](https://cpe.org.uk/exemptions).