

# 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 your 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</b> in <b>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. named on a child benefit award letter, birth certificate, passport. Proof you're in full-time education such as student card or letter from your 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</b> : 0300 330 1341.
<b>E. Medical exemption certificate</b> <i>EPS code 0006</i>	Patients with certain medical condition(s) or physical 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	Patients should speak to their GP or doctor who will complete and submit an FP92A. Practitioners can order FP92A application forms and return envelopes <a href="#">from</a>

	possession of a valid medical exemption certificate.	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.	<a href="#">the Primary Care Support England portal</a> .  For more information on medical exemption certificates patients can speak to <b>NHS Help with Health Costs</b> : 0300 330 1341.
<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> An HRT PPC is 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 certificate is valid. The names of any dependents are not printed on the HC2 certificate.	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 exemption from prescription charges.	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.  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>	Patients who get or are included in an award for Income Support or Income-	Possession of a valid Income Support or Income-related Employment and Support	<b>Income Support</b> – You can no longer make a new claim for Income Support. For more

<p>OR</p> <p><b>Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)</b> EPS code 0011</p>	<p>related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Partners (including civil partners) or any dependent under the age of 20 included in an award are also entitled to receive free NHS prescriptions.</p>	<p>Allowance (ESA) award notice or letter.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Possession of <b>contribution-based</b> ESA, <u>does not</u> automatically entitle patients to help with their health costs.</p>	<p>information see <a href="https://gov.uk/income-support">gov.uk/income-support</a>.</p> <p><b>Income-related ESA</b> – Patients can apply <a href="#">online</a> or by contacting the <b>Jobcentre Plus helpline:</b> 0800 055 6688.</p>
<p><b>K. Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)</b> EPS code 0012</p>	<p>Patients in receipt of income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or those included in an award for JSA – this could be the partner of or any dependent under 20.</p>	<p>Possession of a JSA award notice</p> <p><b>Please note:</b> Possession of <b>contribution-based</b> JSA, <u>does not</u> automatically entitle patients to help with their health costs.</p>	<p>Patients can check if they are eligible and apply <a href="#">online</a> and go to an interview at their local <a href="#">Jobcentre Plus office</a>.</p>
<p><b>M. Tax Credit exemption certificate (no longer valid from 6 April 2025)</b> EPS code 0013</p>	<p><b>No longer a valid exemption from 6 April 2025.</b></p> <p>For more information see our <a href="#">website</a>.</p>	<p>Prescriptions <b>dispensed on or before the 5 April 2025 may still be claimed after 5th April 2025</b> with evidence of a valid Tax Credit claim on the date of dispensing.</p>	<p>To continue being entitled to free NHS prescriptions, patients must meet the Universal Credit criteria for help with health costs or qualify under another valid exemption reasons. Check <a href="#">NHSBSA website</a>.</p>
<p><b>S. Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (including partners)</b> EPS code 0014</p>	<p>Patients and their partners in receipt of Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) paid on its own, or with Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) with Savings Credit.</p> <p><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>.</p>	<p>Possession of a Patient Credit Guarantee Credit award letter.</p>	<p>Patients can apply <a href="#">online</a> or speak to the <b>Pension Credit claim line:</b> 0800 99 1234</p>
<p><b>U. Universal Credit <u>and</u> meets the criteria</b> EPS code 0016</p>	<p>Patients in receipt of Universal Credit, and in their most recent assessment period have earnings of:</p> <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> <p>The 'most recent assessment period' runs for a calendar month from the date of the Universal Credit claim.</p>	<p>Possession of a Universal Credit award notice or statement.</p> <p><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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

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

<p><b>Was prescribed free-of-charge contraceptives</b> EPS code 0010</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Free supply for specified use (previously 'Was prescribed free-of-charge sexual health medication')</b> EPS code 0017</p>	<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>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

### Other exempted persons/categories

<p><b>Prisoners on Release</b> EPS code 0015</p>	<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.</p>	<p>Possession of a valid HM prison-issued FP10 or FP10MDA containing the following information printed in the practice address section: The letters 'HMP'/'YOI' (Young Offenders Institution) Prison or secure accommodation name and address Telephone number 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>	<p>N/A</p>
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#### 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).