

# MEETING THE COST - PRESCRIPTIONS

This leaflet outlines the ways that you can be helped with that essential health cost - prescriptions.

As you know, you are not charged simply for each prescription, but for every item on every prescription.

This can bump up the total considerably, and for some people prescription charges represent a major – and regular - extra cost.

## WHAT HELP IS THERE?

There are **3** ways you can be helped with the cost of prescriptions:

1. Exemption from the charge;
2. Help on the grounds of Low Income;
3. Pre-Payment Certificate.

### 1. EXEMPTION

You will not have to pay for your prescription if you are:

- A child aged under 16: under 19 if in full time education;  
*Proof? Date of Birth on the prescription, (under 16) plus Child Benefit award notice and/or proof from college if aged 16-19.*
- Aged 60 or over;  
*Proof? Date of Birth on the prescription.*
- In receipt of Income Support / JSA(ib) / ESA(ir) or Pension Credit Guarantee Credit or you have a valid Tax Credit exemption certificate (for certain Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit claimants);  
- or partner or dependant of such a claimant  
*Proof? Entitlement letter from the Jobcentre, or award notice from the Pension Centre or a valid NHS Tax Credit exemption certificate, or Tax Credit award notice.*
- Pregnant/given birth in last 12 months;  
*Proof? Medical exemption certificate or card (Medex) via Form FP92A available from your GP or hospital.*

- a War disablement pensioner;
  - the prescription must be for your accepted war disablement  
*Proof? War Pension exemption certificate from Veterans Agency*
- a 16/17 year old leaving Local Authority care, and being wholly or partly maintained by a Local Authority;
- an asylum seeker, or their partner or dependant child, supported by the National Asylum Support Service;
- a permanent resident in a care home and your place is being partly or wholly funded by a local authority – if your place is not being funded, you may qualify on low income grounds, see below
- You have a “specified condition” which are:
  - undergoing treatment for diagnosed cancer; the effects of cancer or the effects of cancer treatment, or
  - a continuing (not temporary) physical disability which prevents you from leaving home without the help of another person, or
  - permanent fistula (e.g. caecostomy, colostomy, laryngostomy or ileostomy) requiring continuous surgical dressing or an appliance, or
  - diabetes mellitus (not treated by diet alone), myxoedema, hypoparathyroidism, diabetes insipidus or other forms of hypopituitarism, forms of hypoadrenalism, (including Addison’s disease) for which specific substitution therapy is essential, and myasthenia gravis, or
  - epilepsy, requiring continuous anti-convulsive therapy.

For exemption on the grounds of having a *specified condition* use Form FP92A, available from/and signed by your Doctor.

## 2. **LOW INCOME**

Some people are eligible for help on the grounds of being on a low income and having little capital.

### **Capital**

If you (and your partner, if you have one) have savings or assets – referred to as ‘capital’- over a fixed limit you cannot apply for help no matter how low your income is.

Currently the capital limits are:

- Any age - £16,000;
- Living permanently in a Care Home - £23,000;

### **Income**

The low income assessment is based on that used to assess Income Support/Housing Benefit, but is more generous. For example it takes into account any housing costs such as your *full* mortgage, or rent left to pay *after* rebate.

### **To Apply**

To apply for help on the grounds of low income complete Form HC1 (HC1SC if in a Care Home) which is available from a variety of sources:

- at your local Jobcentre office;
- doctor, dentist, optician etc;
- the Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA)
  - call 0845 850 1166;
- the Department of Health call 0870 155 5455.

If successful, you will be sent a HC2 certificate which you can show when collecting your prescription. The certificate lasts for 6 or (if aged 60 and over) 12 months, and you can reapply 4 weeks before the end of that period.

Unlike other health costs, with prescriptions you can only be granted full, not partial, help.

### **Appeals**

There is no right of appeal against a 'low income' decision, but you can write for a re-consideration. Write to the Independent Review Section, PPA, PO Box 993, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE99 2TZ.

## **3. PREPAYMENT CERTIFICATES**

If you are not exempt from prescription charges, and not eligible for help on the grounds of low income, but have to regularly pay out for prescriptions, the pre-payment scheme (PPC) can mean substantial savings.

You are charged per item on each script, so if you need more than 5 separate items in a 4 month period, or over 14 items a year, a Pre-Payment Certificate saves money.

You can get a 12 month certificate (£104.00) or a 3 month certificate (£28.25).

### **To Apply**

Apply on the form FP95 available from

- your local chemist;
- the Department of Health (tel: 0870 155 5455, website [www.dh.gov.uk/helpwithhealthcosts](http://www.dh.gov.uk/helpwithhealthcosts))
- the Prescription Pricing Authority on 0845 850 0030 (you can pay by credit or debit card)

### **REFUNDS**

It is possible, in limited circumstances, to get a refund of prescription charges. They have to be claimed back within 3 months of paying the charge, using the Form FP57 obtained from the chemist, doctor or hospital when you pay.

It is also possible to get a refund of a pre-payment certificate – write to the Prescription Pricing Authority, Patient Services, PO Box 845, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE99 2DE. Give the reason why you want a refund (e.g. becoming entitled to an automatic exemption, the death of the patient) plus the original certificate.

## **OTHER HEALTH COSTS**

There are other health charges that you can get help with:

\*Dental treatment      \*sight tests      \* glasses and contact lenses

\*travel to NHS hospital or clinic      \* wigs and fabric supports

The arrangements are very similar to that outlined above e.g. some people are exempt and the low income scheme applies giving full or partial help – see the Dept of Health leaflet HC11, available at chemists, doctors etc, as well as by calling 0870 155 5455 or email: [dh@prolog.uk.com](mailto:dh@prolog.uk.com).

**The information in this factsheet is correct as of April 2009**

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