

Dear Colleague

**Prescription Charges:**

1. This circular informs NHS Boards of:
  - **Prescription Charge Reductions and Prescription Prepayment Certificate Costs;**
  - **Information for Patients;**
  - **Public Information Campaign;**
  - **Prescription Prepayment Certificates – Partial Refunds for Patients;**
  - **Sales of Prescription Prepayment Certificates;**
  - **PPCs – Stock Control and Reimbursement of Excess Amounts Paid for PPCs;**
  - **Patient Eligibility for Reduced Cost Prescriptions and Prescription Prepayment Certificates – Cross Border Issues;**
  - **Discussions with Community Pharmacy Scotland**

**Action by NHS Boards**

2. NHS Boards are asked to draw the contents of this letter to the attention of
  - all community pharmacy contractors;
  - general practitioners; and
  - practice managers

DR JONATHAN PRYCE  
Deputy Director

1 February 2008

**Addresses**

**For action**

Chief Executives, NHS Boards

Chief Executive, NHS National  
Services Scotland

**For information:**

Chief Executive, NHS 24

Counter Fraud Services

**Enquires to:**

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## **Prescription Charge Reductions and Prescription Prepayment Certificate Costs**

In a statement to the Scottish Parliament on 5 December 2007 the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing announced the Scottish Government's proposal that from 1 April this year the cost of the per item prescription charge would be reduced from £6.85 to £5.00, a reduction of more than 25%. Also, the cost of a Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC) would be reduced by 51%, to £48.00 for a 12 month certificate and £17.00 for a 4 month certificate. Implementation of these proposals will be subject to Parliamentary procedure.

### **Reduced Prescription charges**

<b>Prices</b>	<b>4 Month PPCs</b>	<b>12 Month PPCs</b>	<b>Single Prescription Item</b>
<b>Current Prices</b>	£35.85	£98.70	£6.85
<b>1 April 2008</b>	£17.00	£48.00	£5.00

### **Information for Patients**

A short leaflet has been produced and will be distributed to community pharmacies and dispensing doctor practices for issue to patients as required. The leaflet, which is attached as the Annex to this letter sets out the proposed timetable for the phased abolition of prescription charges and PPCs.

### **Public Information Campaign**

A major public information campaign is being prepared campaign material will include an information pack for use in community pharmacies and dispensing doctor surgeries.

### **Prescription Prepayment Certificates – Partial Refunds for Patients**

It is proposed that patients with PPCs purchased in 2007-08 which will remain valid beyond 1 April 2008 for 1 complete month, or longer, will be able to claim a partial refund of the cost of that PPC. Claim forms for partial refunds arising from the phased abolition of charges are being produced and will be distributed to community pharmacies in due course for issue to patients alongside the patient information leaflet. All refund claims made in respect of PPC purchases will be administered by the Practitioner Services Division of National Services Scotland.

In addition, the current regulatory provisions for PPC refund claims in specific circumstances will remain in force until 1 April 2011. This will enable full refunds to be made in appropriate cases, and will also ensure that qualifying claims can be considered in respect of PPCs which have outstanding validity of less than 1 complete month from 1 April.

## **Sales of Prescription Prepayment Certificates**

Community pharmacies and dispensing doctor practices can continue to sell 4 month and 12 month PPCs in the period up to 1 April. It is for patients to choose. However, information about the proposed cost reductions and refund arrangements should be offered to assist patients to reach a decision.

## **PPCs – Stock Control and Reimbursement of Excess Amounts Paid for PPCs**

Arrangements will be put in place at NSS Practitioner Services Division to reconcile stocks of unsold PPCs remaining in community pharmacies and dispensing doctor practices on 1 April 2008 with the proposed lower value of PPCs from that date. Contractors will be reimbursed 'excess' amounts paid for PPCs bought in 2007-08 but not sold before the cost is reduced on 1 April.

In the meantime, community pharmacists and dispensing doctors are asked not to return unsold PPCs to National Services Scotland and request refunds. These certificates will be revalued by NSS Practitioner Services for sale to patients after 1 April 2008. These PPCs can then be sold at the new price from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

Increased demand for PPCs is expected from 1 April after the proposed price reduction. Community pharmacists and dispensing doctors are asked to prepare their stocks accordingly in order to meet increased demand. Orders received at NSS Practitioner Services Division from February 2008 to the end of March 2008 will be invoiced for payment at the 2008-09 price in May 2008.

## **Patient Eligibility for Reduced Cost Prescriptions and Prescription Prepayment Certificates – Cross Border Issues**

Patients who live in Scotland but are registered with a GP practice in England would not automatically benefit from a lower Scottish prescription charge. Arrangements are proposed which would enable this group of patients to receive an entitlement card so that, when they present prescriptions printed on an English prescription form (FP10) for dispensing in Scotland, the reduced Scottish charge will be levied. Patients presenting prescriptions written in England, Wales or Northern Ireland for dispensing in Scotland would not otherwise be eligible for the reduced Scottish charge.

It is intended that the rate applicable in England will be charged for all non-Scottish prescriptions dispensed in Scotland, unless an entitlement card is also presented at the point of dispensing.

Patients who live in England but are registered with a GP practice in Scotland would be charged the reduced Scottish rate if their prescriptions were presented for dispensing in Scotland. Prescriptions presented by this group of patients are printed on the Scottish prescription form (GP10) and carry the patient's Community Health Index number.

Non-Scottish students studying in Scotland and registered with a Scottish GP practice would be eligible for the reduced Scottish charge if they presented their prescriptions for dispensing in Scotland.

**NHS Circular:  
PCA (P)3 M(15) (2008)**

Scottish students studying elsewhere in the UK and registered with a GP practice in that country would be subject to the prescription charging regime where they are studying.

Visitors to Scotland who register with a Scottish GP practice as temporary residents would benefit from the reduced Scottish charge. All other visitors would be outwith primary care NHS arrangements.

**Discussions with Community Pharmacy Scotland**

The Scottish Government is in discussion with Community Pharmacy Scotland about the possible effects of these changes on NHS community pharmacies.

**Scottish Government  
Health Directorate  
1 February 2008**

ANNEX



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON PRESCRIPTION CHARGES

On 1 April 2008 the Scottish Government propose to reduce prescription charges to £5.00, with further reductions towards a proposed total abolition of the charges in 2011.

(Source: [www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2007/12/05141211](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2007/12/05141211))

### Prices during the proposed Phased Abolition of Prescription Charges

Prices	4 Month PPCs	12 Month PPCs	Single Prescription Item
<b>Current Prices</b>	£35.85	£98.70	£6.85
<b>1 April 2008</b>	£17.00	£48.00	£5.00
<b>1 April 2009</b>	£13.00	£38.00	£4.00
<b>1 April 2010</b>	£10.00	£28.00	£3.00
<b>1 April 2011</b>	0	0	0

Please consider the above proposed timetable for charge reductions before applying for, or renewing, a prescription pre-payment certificate at your Community Pharmacy or from Practitioner Services, and ensure that you tender the correct amount for your certificate.

If you currently hold, or prior to 1 April 2008 purchase, a PPC which will remain valid beyond 1 April 2008, you will be able to claim a partial refund in respect of any complete months left outstanding on your certificate.

Further information will be available on the following websites or by contacting your area office of Practitioner Services at one of the addresses given below:

Scottish Government: [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

Practitioner Services: [www.psd.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.psd.scot.nhs.uk)

Aberdeen Regional Office	Edinburgh Regional Office	Glasgow Regional Office
NHS National Services Scotland Practitioner Services (Medical) Bridge View 1 North Esplanade West Aberdeen AB11 5QF 01224 358400	NHS National Services Scotland Practitioner Services (Medical) Stevenson House 555 Gorgie Road Edinburgh EH11 3LG 0131 537 8473	NHS National Services Scotland Practitioner Services (Medical) Clifton House Clifton Place Glasgow G3 7LN 0141 300 1300