

Dear Colleague

The National Health Service (Free Prescriptions and Charges for Drugs and Appliances) (Scotland) Regulations 2011

Summary

1. This circular advises NHS Boards of :
 - the abolition of prescription charges in Scotland;
 - the charging arrangements for other UK prescriptions;
 - amendments to prescription stationery;
 - processing electronic scripts; and
 - guidance for community pharmacists in relation to the Minor Ailment Service.
2. Charging and exemption arrangements are detailed in **Annex A**. Prescription stationery processing arrangements and an example of the revised form are detailed in **Annex B**. Guidance in relation to the Minor Ailment Service (MAS) is included in **Annex C**.
3. A Q&A document is being issued to all Community Pharmacies, Dispensing Doctor Practices and GP Surgeries providing answers to questions which may be asked by patients and others.
4. NHS Boards are asked to note the content of this circular and bring to the attention of all relevant staff. This should include all those involved in dealing with matters relating to prescription charges and prescription stationery.

Yours sincerely



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Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards

Chief Executive, NHS National
Services Scotland

Directors of Pharmacy

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For information

Chief Executive, NHS 24

Counter Fraud Services

Chief Executive, State Hospital Board
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NHS Prescription Charging Arrangements in Scotland

Regulations have been approved by the Scottish Parliament to abolish NHS prescription charges in Scotland. From the 1 April 2011 Scottish NHS prescription forms presented for dispensing in Scotland will not attract a charge.

Prescription forms from Wales and Northern Ireland will be dispensed free of charge under current arrangements when presented for dispensing in Scotland.

Prescription forms from England will be charged from the 1 April 2011 at the new English rate of £7.40. The exception being if the patient is exempt from paying charges as listed in Regulation 4 of the National Health Service (Free Prescriptions and Charges for Drugs and Appliances) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 or the prescription form is accompanied by a valid entitlement card (see below.).

NHS Charging Arrangements for Overseas Visitors in Scotland

It is for healthcare providers to determine an overseas visitors need and eligibility to access NHS healthcare or services as detailed in [CEL 9 \(2010\)](#).

Where a person is deemed eligible to access services and is provided with a Scottish prescription form they will be entitled to have the prescription dispensed free of charge if presented in a pharmacy in Scotland in the same way as a person ordinarily resident in Scotland.

NHS Prescription Charging Arrangements elsewhere in the UK.

Any Scottish prescription form presented for dispensing in England will be charged at the English rate, £7.40 per item, unless the patient qualifies for exemption or the item(s) is exempt from charge.

Any Scottish prescription form presented for dispensing in Wales or Northern Ireland will be charged at the rate in force at the time. This is currently £0.00.

Entitlement Cards

Patients resident in Scotland and registered with a GP Practice in England will only benefit from the abolition of charges if they hold a valid entitlement card and present their prescription for dispensing at a pharmacy in Scotland. For an entitlement card to be valid, the patient's details and address on the entitlement card **must** match the information on the prescription form.

Patients should be directed to Practitioner Services Division on 0141 300 1300 or 0131 275 6000 to apply for an entitlement card.

Exemption Certificates

Medical - The current list of medical exemptions will remain and patients suffering from any of the listed conditions will continue to be eligible to apply for a medical exemption certificate. GPs should continue to verify the patient's eligibility for the appropriate medical exemption as certificates will be required to verify a patient's entitlement to register for the Minor Ailment Service (MAS) and for entitlement to exemption if a prescription is dispensed in England.

Maternity - GPs should also continue to verify the patient's eligibility for maternity exemption as certificates will be required to verify a patient's entitlement to register for MAS and for entitlement to exemption if a prescription is dispensed in England. The Maternity Exemption Certificate also enables an expectant/nursing mother to access free NHS dental treatment.

Prescription Prepayment Certificates (PPCs)

Prescription Prepayment Certificates are no longer available for sale in Scotland. Community Pharmacists and Dispensing Doctors should return any unsold PPCs to the address below by 30 June 2011 for a refund.

Pre-payment Certificate Department
Practitioner Services
NHS National Services Scotland
Gyle Square
1 South Gyle Crescent
Edinburgh
EH8 9AL

Public Information Material

A small supply of the following stationery items are being distributed direct to contractors.

HCS2 Help with Health Costs booklets
HCS3 Help with Health Costs posters
Minor Ailment Service Leaflets

Further supplies continue to be available from APS Group Scotland. Orders should be placed by either;

Fax – 0131 629 9968

E-Mail – stockorders.dppas@apsgroup.co.uk

Please ensure stocks are kept replenished.

Prescription Stationery

The current Version 5 prescription stationery will remain in circulation. However amendments are being made to the wording of the patient declaration on the top of the form. The revised stationery will be phased in as current stocks are used up. A new version is **NOT** being introduced.

GP10(SS)5	
NOTE	PATIENT DECLARATIONS If dispensed in Scotland, sign part B to confirm that the items overleaf have been dispensed. If dispensed elsewhere in the UK, please follow dispenser's instructions.
PART A	I have paid £ <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> : <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> Now sign and fill in Part B
PART B	Cross ONE box: I am the patient <input type="checkbox"/> patient's representative <input type="checkbox"/>
Sign here	<input type="text"/> Date / /
PART C	The patient doesn't have to pay because he/she: <i>(x in the appropriate box)</i>
A <input type="checkbox"/>	is under 16 years of age
B <input type="checkbox"/>	is 16, 17 or 18 years of age and in full time education
C <input type="checkbox"/>	is 80 years of age or over
D <input type="checkbox"/>	has a valid maternity or medical exemption certificate (EC92)
E <input type="checkbox"/>	has a valid prescription pre-payment certificate
F <input type="checkbox"/>	has a valid War Pension exemption certificate
G <input type="checkbox"/>	gets, or has a partner who gets Income Support or income related Employment Support Allowance
H <input type="checkbox"/>	has a partner who gets 'Pension Credit guarantee credit' (PCGC)
I <input type="checkbox"/>	gets, or has a partner who gets, income based Jobseeker's Allowance
J <input type="checkbox"/>	is entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate
K <input type="checkbox"/>	is named on a current NHS HC2 certificate
L <input type="checkbox"/>	was prescribed free-of-charge contraceptives
M <input type="checkbox"/>	was prescribed free-of-charge medicine to treat tuberculosis
PART D Patient Declaration	"I declare that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete. I understand that if it is not, appropriate action may be taken. I confirm proper entitlement to exemption/remission. To enable the NHS to check I have a valid exception/remission and for the purposes of prevention, detection and investigation of crime, I consent to the disclosure of relevant information from this form including to and by the NHS Business Authority, the Department for Work and Pensions, HM Revenue and Customs and Local Authorities. I agree to pay the cost of the prescription if I am later found not to be entitled. In addition, a statutory penalty may be payable." Cross ONE box: I am the patient <input type="checkbox"/> patient's representative <input type="checkbox"/> Now sign below <input type="text"/>
Print name & address if different from overleaf	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

From now on **Part B** on the reverse of the prescription form should be signed as confirmation that the prescription item(s) have been dispensed. For information on the eligibility of overseas visitors to receive NHS services, including NHS prescriptions, see the relevant paragraph in Annex A above. Patients are no longer required to mark an exemption category on an NHS prescription form unless they present their prescription in England and qualify for exemption.

Processing Prescription Forms - Electronic Exemption Status

From 1 April 2011 patients will sign the declaration in Section B on the reverse side of a paper prescription form and will not be required to annotate an exemption status. The ePharmacy Programme will be working with Patient Medication Record (PMR) system suppliers to update the IT functionality to support the abolition of prescription charges in Scotland as currently electronic claim messages **must** include a non-exempt or exemption status.

In the meantime, community pharmacy PMR systems will continue to apply the exemption statuses currently recorded in the patient PMR record in the electronic claim message or they will prompt for the recording of an exemption status where one is not currently recorded for the patient. The following guidance describes how community pharmacists should approach these two scenarios until such time as PMR systems have been updated.

- A patient **HAS** an exemption status or non-exempt status recorded:

No additional action is required to the existing process. The exemption status recorded will be populated in any electronic claim messages and you may be asked to confirm the patient details. Patients who were previously not exempt from prescription charges should continue to be recorded as non-exempt. Patients who have outstanding prescription pre-payment certificates should also continue to be recorded as having a pre-payment certificate although pharmacists may wish to remove the expiry date as that will no longer be valid. This will cover the significant majority of patient PMR records as they will have the patient exemption status already recorded.

- A patient **DOES NOT** have an exemption status or non-exempt status recorded:

When a new patient presents, or for whatever reason a patient record does not have an exemption status recorded, an exemption status must be set in the PMR to enable electronic claims to be sent.

Both of the above scenarios will be supported by the automatic setting of age exemption status based on a patient's date of birth.

Community pharmacists may wish to reduce the prescription levy held on their PMR systems from £3.00 to £0.00. PSD have put in place new working processes where the exemption status will not be used in the payment processing for Scottish prescription forms.

Further guidance on PMR enhancements to support the abolition of prescription charges will follow in due course.

Minor Ailment Service (MAS)

Circular [PCA \(P\) \(2011\) \(6\)](#) provides an updated set of Directions and service specification for the Minor Ailment Service (MAS). In essence, there is no change to MAS as a result of the abolition of prescription charges. The same groups of patients who were eligible to register and use MAS prior to the abolition of prescription charges will continue to be eligible. Further information is available in the circular.

Whilst patients are no longer required to mark an exemption category on an NHS prescription form unless they are presenting it in England and qualify for exemption they **will** require to mark an exemption category on a CP2 form if they are registering or receiving care under MAS. GPs have been advised to continue to issue medical and maternity exemption certificates in order to assist community pharmacists in verifying a patient's entitlement to register for and use MAS.

In relation to Annex B of this Circular:

- where a patient previously has an exemption status recorded in their Patient Medication Record (PMR) it will be used to enable MAS registrations, including eligibility checks; and
- where there is no exemption status recorded in the PMR the addition of an exemption status that qualifies a patient to register for MAS or a non-exempt status during the dispensing of NHS prescriptions, will enable the pharmacist to benefit from the MAS eligibility checking built into PMR systems. If a patient is recorded as non-exempt and later wants to register for MAS and is eligible to do so their exemption status can be updated once eligibility has been ascertained and the registration can then proceed.