

ARE YOU ENTITLED TO

HELP WITH HEALTH COSTS?

- NHS prescriptions
- NHS dental treatment
- Glasses, contact lenses and eye examinations
- NHS wigs and fabric supports
- Travel to hospital for NHS treatment



The Scottish
Government

INTRODUCTION

This document gives guidance about NHS charges in Scotland.

Most NHS treatment is free, although there can be charges for some things. This document tells you what you are entitled to. It also tells you about the help you might get with the cost of the following if you are on a low income:

- NHS prescriptions;
- NHS dental treatment;
- Glasses, contact lenses and eye examinations;
- NHS wigs and fabric supports from a hospital (spinal or abdominal supports or surgical brassiere);
- necessary costs of travel to an NHS hospital for treatment.

THIS DOCUMENT GIVES GENERAL GUIDANCE ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE TREATED AS A COMPLETE AND AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF LAW.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

You can quickly check if you are entitled to free treatment by reading pages 7 to 11.

For more detailed guidance go to page 4 and 5 of this document and find the group you most easily fit into, then go to the page number shown, e.g. if you are 60 or over, go to page 13.

After reading about the group that most applies to you, check to see if any others also apply. You may fit into more than one group. If so, you need to make sure you read about both groups.

For instance, you might be:

- 60 or over and also on a low income
- or**
- pregnant and also have a specified medical condition.

When you have found the group or groups you belong to and what help you can get, go on to: 'Claiming Help When You Go For Treatment' (pages 32 to 34).

Refunds. You can also get information about refunds in this document – read pages 36 to 41.

The Penalty Charge. If you are found to have made a wrongful claim for help with health costs, you will face penalty charges and may be prosecuted. Read page 41.

Current Rates. The current rates of NHS charges and optical voucher values in Scotland are given in leaflet HCS2 'A Quick Guide to Help with Health Costs – Charges and Optical Voucher Values'. (www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2008/04/14112705/0) This leaflet is also available from GP Surgeries, Community Pharmacies, Citizens Advice Scotland and Jobcentre Plus.

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FREE NHS PRESCRIPTIONS

You can get free NHS prescriptions if at the time the prescription is dispensed you:

- are aged 60 or over;
- are under 16;
- are in full-time education and aged 16, 17 or 18;
- are pregnant or have had a baby in the previous 12 months and have a valid exemption certificate;
- have a listed medical condition and have a valid exemption certificate;
- have a continuing physical disability which means you cannot go out without help from another person and have a valid exemption certificate;
- are an NHS in-patient;
- are getting, or your partner gets:
Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or
Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
(Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance (Contributory) and Disability Living Allowance do not count as they are not income-related), or Pension Credit Guarantee Credit;
- hold a valid Prescription Pre-payment Certificate;
- are entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate;
- are named on a valid HC2 certificate issued under the terms of the NHS Low Income Scheme;
- are a war pensioner, the prescription is for your pensionable disablement and you have a valid war pension exemption certificate.

The following items are supplied free:

- medication administered at a hospital;
- prescribed contraceptives;
- medication personally administered by a GP;
- medication supplied by a hospital for the treatment of a sexually transmissible infection (STI);
- medication prescribed for the treatment of tuberculosis (TB).



FREE NHS DENTAL TREATMENT

NHS dental examinations are free to people ordinarily resident in the UK or who belong in one of the categories for exemption from NHS charges set out in the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Scotland) Regulations 1989.

You can get free NHS dental treatment if, when the treatment starts, you are:

- aged under 18;
- aged 18 and in full-time education;
- pregnant or have borne a child within the 12 months before treatment starts;
- an NHS in-patient and the treatment is carried out by the hospital dentist;
- an NHS Hospital Dental Service out-patient*;
- a Community Dental Service patient.*

** There may be a charge for dentures and bridges.*

Or, if when the treatment starts or when the charge is made:

- you are getting, or your partner gets:
Income Support, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or
Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
(Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance (Contributory) and Disability Living Allowance do not count as they are not income-related), or Pension Credit Guarantee Credit;
- you are entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate;
- you are named on a valid HC2 certificate issued under the terms of the NHS Low Income Scheme.

Partial help:

- if you are named on a valid HC3 certificate you might get some help towards the cost of your NHS dental treatment.

War pensioners:

- help may be available. Read page 30.



NHS OPTICAL VOUCHERS (towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses)

NHS eye examinations are free to people ordinarily resident in the UK or who belong in one of the categories for exemption from NHS charges set out in the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Scotland) Regulations 1989.

You can get vouchers if you:

- are under 16;
- are in full-time education and aged 16, 17 or 18;
- need complex lenses – read page 33;
- are getting, or your partner gets:
Income Support, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or
Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance (Contributory) and Disability Living Allowance do not count as they are not income-related), or Pension Credit Guarantee Credit;
- are entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate;
- are named on a valid HC2 certificate issued under the terms of the NHS Low Income Scheme.

Partial help:

- if you are named on a valid HC3 certificate you might get some help.

NOTE: If your glasses or contact lenses cost more than your voucher value, you will have to pay the difference.

War pensioners:

- help may be available. Read page 30.



REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF GLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES

You can get vouchers if you:

- are under 16;
- if you are 16 or over conditions apply – read page 26.



FREE NHS WIGS AND FABRIC SUPPORTS FROM A HOSPITAL

You can get free NHS wigs and fabric supports (spinal or abdominal supports or surgical brassiere) if you:

- are under 16;
- are aged 16, 17 or 18 and in full-time education;
- are 60 or over;
- are a hospital in-patient;
- are pregnant or have had a baby in the previous 12 months and have a valid exemption certificate;
- hold a valid Prescription Pre-payment Certificate;
- are a war pensioner and the wig or fabric support is for your pensionable disablement and you have a valid war pension exemption certificate;
- are getting, or your partner gets:
Income Support, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or
Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance (Contributory) and Disability Living Allowance do not count as they are not income-related), or Pension Credit Guarantee Credit;
- are entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate;
- are named on a valid HC2 certificate issued under the terms of the NHS Low Income Scheme.

Partial help:

- if you are named on a valid HC3 certificate you might get some help.



TRAVEL COSTS **(to hospital for NHS treatment)**

You can get help with necessary travel costs (including travel costs for your dependent children) if you:

- are getting, or your partner gets:
Income Support, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or
Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance (Contributory) and Disability Living Allowance do not count as they are not income-related), or Pension Credit Guarantee Credit;
- are entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate;
- are named on a valid HC2 certificate issued under the terms of the NHS Low Income Scheme;
- are a war pensioner and the hospital treatment is for your pensionable disablement.

For children under 16 and those aged 16 to 18 – also read page 29.

Partial help:

- if you are named on a valid HC3 certificate you might get some help with travel costs.

AGE GROUPS

CHILDREN UNDER 16 AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION AGED 16, 17 AND 18

Full-time education means you must be receiving full-time instruction from a recognised educational establishment such as a school, college or university. To be a recognised establishment the place where you are studying must be registered with the Scottish Government Education Directorates, Information and Analytical Services Division, ScotXed Unit. If it is not registered with them you still may be able to get help with health costs under the NHS Low Income Scheme – read pages 20 to 22.

You get free:

- NHS prescriptions;
- NHS dental treatment for any course of treatment that starts before your 19th birthday;
- NHS wigs and fabric supports.

You also get:

- vouchers towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses:

If you have lost or damaged your glasses or contact lenses – read page 26;

If you need help with travel costs to and from hospital for NHS treatment – read page 29.

OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE (not in full-time education)

You get free NHS dental treatment for any course of treatment which starts before your 18th birthday.

If you need help with travel costs to and from the hospital for NHS treatment – read page 29;

If you are aged 16 or 17 and supported by a Local Authority because you have recently left Local Authority care – read page 27;

If you don't have much money to pay other health costs, you can still apply for help under the NHS Low Income Scheme, read – pages 20-22.

PEOPLE AGED 60 OR OVER

You get free:

- NHS prescriptions;
- NHS wigs and fabric supports.

For help with other health costs, check to see if you fit into any of the groups on pages 7 to 11.

INCOME GROUPS

PEOPLE GETTING BENEFITS OR TAX CREDITS

Either you or your partner may be getting the benefit or credit; it will cover both of you and any dependent children who do not qualify in their own right.

If you are waiting for your Income Support claim to be settled and need help urgently with any health costs – read pages 20-22.

INCOME SUPPORT

You get free:

- NHS prescriptions;
- NHS dental treatment;
- NHS wigs and fabric supports.

You also get:

- a voucher towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses;
- refunds of necessary travel costs to and from hospital for NHS treatment for you, your partner and any dependent children and young people under 19.

INCOME-RELATED EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE (ESA(IR))

(from 27 October 2008)

If you get income-related ESA you are entitled to the same things as people getting Income Support (see above).

Contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA(C))

IMPORTANT: On its own, ESA(C) does not entitle you to help with health costs. If you have to pay health costs, check to see if you are in any of the groups listed on pages 4 and 5. Or you might be able to get help if you are on a low income – read pages 20-22.

If you are not sure about the type of ESA you are getting, ask at your Jobcentre Plus office.

If you are waiting for your ESA claim to be settled and need help urgently with any health costs, read pages 20-22.

PENSION CREDIT GUARANTEE CREDIT

If you:

- get Pension Credit Guarantee Credit;
- get Pension Credit Guarantee Credit with Savings Credit; or
- are aged under 60 and your partner gets Pension Credit Guarantee Credit;

you are entitled to the same help with health costs as people getting Income Support or income-related Employment and Support Allowance– see page 14.

How to check if you are getting Pension Credit Guarantee Credit

Your payment book (if you have one) is simply marked 'Pension Credit'. Only your award notice tells you what type of Pension Credit you get. This is shown at item 5 on the page entitled 'How your Pension Credit has been worked out'. If you have not received an award notice or have mislaid it, you should ring the Pension Service on Freephone 0800 991234 and ask for a copy.

IMPORTANT: If you only get Pension Credit **Savings** Credit on its own, this does not entitle you to help with health costs. If you have to pay health costs, check to see if you are in any of the other groups listed on pages 7 to 11. Or you might be able to get help if you are on a low income – read pages 20-22.

INCOME-BASED JOB SEEKER'S ALLOWANCE (JSA (IB))

If you get JSA (IB) you and your partner are entitled to the same things as people getting Income Support – see page 14.

Contribution-based JSA (JSA(C))

IMPORTANT: On its own, JSA(C) does not entitle you to help with health costs. If you have to pay health costs, check to see if you are in any of the groups listed on pages 4 and 5. Or you might be able to get help if you are on a low income – read pages 20-22.

If you are not sure about the type of JSA you are getting, ask at your Jobcentre Plus office.

If you are waiting for your JSA claim to be settled and need help urgently with any health costs, read pages 20-22.

OTHER BENEFITS

Only Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit Guarantee Credit or JSA (IB) count for automatic help with health costs.

Other benefits such as Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance (Contributory) and Disability Living Allowance don't count because they are not income-related. If you have to pay health costs, check to see if you are in any of the other groups listed on pages 7 to 11. Or you might be able to get help if you are on a low income – see pages 20-22.

TAX CREDITS

- Working Tax Credit (WTC)
- Child Tax Credit (CTC)

1. If you meet the qualifying conditions (read paragraph 3 on page 18) you will be sent an NHS tax credit exemption certificate by the Business Services Authority (BSA) Newcastle. They will send you one automatically, you do not need to apply for one – but read paragraph 11 on page 19.

2. If you meet the qualifying conditions you can get free:

- NHS prescriptions;
- NHS dental treatment;
- NHS wigs and fabric supports.

You also get:

- vouchers towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses;
- vouchers towards the cost of repair of glasses, if under 16, or if over 16 and in accordance with certain conditions (see page 26);
- refunds of necessary travel costs to and from hospital for NHS treatment for you, your partner or any dependent children and young people under 19.

Qualifying Conditions

3. For you to qualify for help with health charges, condition A **plus** one of the B conditions – B1 or B2 or B3 – must apply to you, as follows:

Condition A: your family income for tax credits is £15,050 or less (this is on your tax credit award notice) **and** one of the following must also apply:

Condition B1: you are working and have children and you are getting WTC and CTC,

or

Condition B2: you are working and disabled and you are getting WTC with a disability element – check your award notice,

or

Condition B3: you are not eligible for WTC but get CTC. This might be because you don't work 16 hours per week, or your income doesn't count as earnings, e.g. because you are a student nurse.

4. HM Revenue & Customs issues tax credit award notices that tell families they might be entitled to other help. Only HM Revenue & Customs can say whether or not you are eligible for WTC or CTC.

5. If you are unsure about the amount of your income for tax credit purposes, you can check this with HM Revenue & Customs Helpline on: 0845 300 3900.

6. For people with hearing or speech difficulties the Helpline number is 0845 300 3909.

7. If you have made a claim but not yet received your tax credit award notice you should contact HM Revenue & Customs (not the Business Service Authority).

If you don't have an old certificate or new tax credit award

8. If you meet the conditions for help, as explained in paragraph 3 on page 18, you are entitled to claim exemption as soon as you get your tax credit award notice. You can sign NHS prescription and treatment forms to say you don't have to pay because you get tax credit. If you pay and subsequently find that you qualify for help you can claim a refund if you obtain a receipt from your pharmacist on form HCSR. You can only get a receipt at the time you pay the charge.

NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificates

9. Patient Services of the Business Services Authority (BSA) – an NHS body based in Newcastle – sends out NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificates on behalf of the Health Departments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. You don't have to make a separate application for a certificate.

Please expect to wait up to 6 weeks for your certificate after you get your award notice. (Read paragraph 11 below.)

10. HM Revenue & Customs will send information to the BSA each month about families who are entitled to a certificate.

11. The BSA cannot send you an exemption certificate until they receive the information from HM Revenue & Customs. **This could be up to 6 weeks after you get your tax credit award.**

You can still get free treatment without the exemption certificate – read paragraph 8 above.

If you are still unsure about whether or not you are entitled to an NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate, ring the BSA on 0845 609 9299, and have your Tax Credit Award notice ready so you can tell them what is on it.

If you lose your NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate

12. Tell the BSA by writing to the:

Business Services Authority
Exemption Issue Office, PO Box 1011
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 2ZP

and let them know what happened. They will send you a duplicate.

If you do not qualify for help through tax credit exemption

13. Tax credit exemption is for people who are working, or are disabled, or who have children.

14. If you do not qualify for help through tax credits you may be able to claim help through the NHS Low Income Scheme – read pages 20-22.

15. Ring HM Revenue & Customs Helpline for advice about other help that might be available through tax credits. Read paragraphs 4 and 5 on page 18.

THE NHS LOW INCOME SCHEME

If you have been accepted for NHS treatment and have to pay for any of the items and services listed on page 2 of this document, the NHS Low Income Scheme may be able to help you with the cost. If you have capital which is over the capital limits as shown on the Low Income Scheme claim form HC1, you cannot claim any help through this scheme.

If you have a partner, their property, savings and any other money is counted with yours.

If a dependent child under 16 has to go to hospital for NHS treatment, you can claim help with their travel costs; it's your income that counts.

If you would like to find out if the scheme can help you, pick up an HC1 form (claim for help with health costs) from a Jobcentre Plus office or NHS hospital. Your dentist or optician may have copies too or ring: 0845 850 1166 to get a copy by post.

You can fill in a special short claim form, the HC1(SC) if one of the following applies to you:

- you live permanently in a care home and the local authority helps you with the cost;

or

- you are supported by the local authority because you are aged 16 or 17 and recently left local authority care.

Ask your home manager/local authority/care worker for an HC1(SC) claim form. Otherwise, use the normal form, the HC1.

If you are aged 16 or over you can make your own claim on an HC1, but you needn't do this if you count as a dependant of someone who is getting an eligible benefit or credit (read pages 14 to 17).

Fill in the HC1 or HC1(SC) and send it off in the envelope that comes with it. The claim form tells you what to do and may ask you to send in evidence of your income.

If you have any queries about how to fill in these forms, or what to send, you can call Patient Services of the Business Services Authority on 0845 850 1166, or write to the:

Business Services Authority
Patient Services, Sandyford House, Archbold Terrace,
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE2 1DB.

Patient Services uses the information you have supplied to work out how much help you might get towards your health costs. The HC1 tells you more about this and explains what counts as income.

NHS Low Income Scheme Certificates

If you qualify for help you will be sent an NHS certificate HC2 which entitles you to full help or an NHS certificate HC3 which entitles you to partial help with health costs. The certificate will tell you who gets help and how long it lasts.

If you need help urgently with any health costs while you are waiting for Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit or tax credits to be awarded, make a separate claim on a Low Income Scheme form HC1. Don't wait for your benefit or credit claim to be settled. But if you have a tax credit award notice, read pages 17 to 21 to see if you can get help without making a low income claim.

If you need emergency NHS dental treatment, or don't want to delay your NHS treatment or wait for your glasses or contact lenses to be repaired or replaced (but read pages 25, 26, 33 and 34 first) you may need to pay and claim a refund later.

If you want to claim a refund of any health cost – read pages 36 to 41, 'HOW TO CLAIM A REFUND'.

People seeking asylum who are supported by the National Asylum Support Services will be sent an NHS Charges Certificate (HC2) for full help along with their first support payment. Also, read page 31, 'PEOPLE FROM ABROAD'.

OTHER GROUPS

PEOPLE WITH SPECIFIED MEDICAL CONDITIONS INCLUDING NEEDING HELP TO GO OUT

You can get free NHS prescriptions if you have a valid medical exemption certificate issued by NHS National Services Scotland because you have:

- a permanent fistula (for example, caecostomy, colostomy, laryngostomy or ileostomy) requiring continuous surgical dressing or requiring an appliance;
- a form of hypoadrenalism (for example, Addison's Disease) for which specific substitution therapy is essential;
- diabetes insipidus and other forms of hypopituitarism;
- diabetes mellitus except where treatment is by diet alone;
- hypoparathyroidism;
- myasthenia gravis;
- myxoedema;
- epilepsy requiring continuous anti-convulsive therapy;

or

- you have a continuing physical disability which means you cannot go out without the help of another person.

Only the medical conditions listed count. If you are unsure about the name of your condition, check with your doctor. IT IS UP TO YOU TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE ENTITLED.

To apply for a medical exemption certificate ask your doctor for form EC92A. The form tells you what to do.

Your exemption certificate will be posted to you. Medical exemption certificates normally last for 5 years and then need to be renewed.

You may receive a reminder that your certificate needs to be renewed. But it is your responsibility to ensure that it is renewed.

PRESCRIPTION PRE-PAYMENT CERTIFICATES

If you are not entitled to free prescriptions and you think you will have to pay for more than 3 items in 4 months or 9 items in 12 months, you may find it cheaper to buy a Prescription Pre-payment Certificate (PPC).

You can purchase a PPC over the counter at most community pharmacies or dispensing doctor practices, or you can apply for a PPC by post by getting form EC95. This is available from pharmacies, NHS Boards or NHS National Services Scotland Practitioner Services Area Offices*, the form tells you what to do.

PPC start date

Whether you apply by post, or obtain your PPC over the counter, your PPC will start from the date your application is received unless you ask for a different start date. Your start date can be up to one week before or one month later than the date you make your application.

* See page 38 for addresses.

SEXUALLY-TRANSMISSIBLE INFECTIONS (STI)

If you are being treated for an STI at a clinic or a hospital, medication to treat the STI is free when provided by the hospital. You will have to pay prescription charges in the normal way if you are given a prescription to treat an STI and told to take it to a community pharmacy for dispensing.

TUBERCULOSIS PATIENTS

If you are being treated for tuberculosis (TB) any drugs prescribed for the treatment will be free. You will still have to pay other prescription charges unless you are exempt from charges.

PREGNANT WOMEN OR WOMEN WHO HAVE HAD A BABY IN THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

You get free:

- NHS prescriptions, but only if you have a valid maternity exemption certificate issued by the Practitioner Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland;
- dental treatment if, when you are accepted for a course of treatment, you have a valid maternity exemption certificate issued by the Practitioner Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland.

To apply for your maternity exemption certificate get form FW8 from your doctor, midwife or health visitor. The form tells you what to do.

PEOPLE REGISTERED BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED

If you need help with health costs, check if you are in one of the groups listed on pages 7 to 11.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST OR DAMAGED THEIR GLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES

If you are under 16 you get a voucher towards the cost of repair or replacement.

If you are 16 or over you may be entitled to a voucher towards the cost of repair or replacement if Practitioner Services, a division of NHS National Services Scotland, agrees that:

- the loss or damage was due to illness or disability; **and**
- you can't get any help through a warranty, insurance or after sales service; **and**
- you would be entitled to an NHS voucher for glasses or contact lenses – read page 40.

PEOPLE WITH IMPAIRED HEARING

You can get free, on loan, NHS hearing aids.

The aids will be supplied with batteries (and replacements) and fitted, serviced and maintained free of charge.

If you want to know more, please ask your GP.

PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN A CARE HOME

These were previously called residential care or nursing homes. Living in a care home does not automatically entitle you to help:

- if you are under 60 and getting Income Support, or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance – read page 14;
- if you are 60 or over and getting Pension Credit Guarantee Credit, read page 15;
- otherwise check to see if you can get help via the NHS Low Income Scheme – read pages 20 to 22.

YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY A LOCAL AUTHORITY AFTER LEAVING CARE

If you are aged 16 or 17 and supported by a local authority because you recently left local authority care, you are entitled to full help with health costs through the NHS Low Income Scheme. Read pages 20 to 22.

If you are not supported by a local authority and you are not getting Income Support, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, you may still be able to get help through the Low Income Scheme. Also check if you are in any of the groups on pages 7 to 11.

NHS HOSPITAL IN-PATIENTS

You get free:

- all NHS treatment;
- wigs and fabric supports supplied while in hospital (including spinal or abdominal supports and surgical brassieres);
- glasses or contact lenses supplied through the hospital eye department (you must choose the cheapest glasses frame available. If you choose a more expensive one, except for medical reasons, you will have to pay the difference);
- medication to take home with you when you leave hospital.

If you ask a dentist or optician to visit you in hospital, you will have to pay the cost in the normal way, as if you were being treated at their practice. Read pages 7 to 11 to see if you are in a group that can get free NHS dental treatment or an NHS voucher towards your glasses.

NHS HOSPITAL OUT-PATIENTS

You get free:

- all medication given to take while you're being treated at the hospital. But you pay a prescription charge(s) for any medication you are prescribed to take at home, unless you're entitled to free NHS prescriptions;
- medication supplied by a hospital to treat a sexually-transmissible infection (STI);
- medication supplied by a hospital to treat tuberculosis.

NHS HOSPITAL DENTAL SERVICE PATIENTS

NHS dental treatment carried out at the hospital is free, but there may be a charge for dentures and bridges unless you are entitled to free NHS dental treatment.

NHS HOSPITAL EYE DEPARTMENT PATIENTS

Eye examinations are free to those who are ordinarily resident in the UK or those who belong in one of the categories of exemption from NHS charges set out in the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Scotland) Regulations 1989.

If your consultant decides that for clinical reasons you need frequent changes of glasses or contact lenses you will only have to pay for the first pair. You may also get help towards the first pair if you are in one of the groups entitled to a voucher – read page 9.

PEOPLE WHO TRAVEL TO HOSPITAL FOR NHS TREATMENT

You may be entitled to help with necessary travelling costs to and from hospital for NHS treatment. This includes check-ups and visits to clinics for treatment of sexually transmissible infections.

You can get help:

- if you are getting benefits or credits – read pages 7 to 11;
- if you have a low income – read pages 20 to 22;
- for your companion if you qualify for help and, for medical reasons, you need a companion to travel with you. Their travel costs are added to your travel costs and it's your income that counts;
- if you are 16 or over but under 19 and are counted as a dependant of someone getting help on the basis of the benefits/credits listed on pages 14 to 20, or through the NHS Low Income Scheme – see pages 20 to 22. Otherwise you can make your own claim, even if you live with your parents – read pages 12 and 13.

Note: If a child under 16 is the patient, it is their parents' income that counts. If someone else takes them to hospital, it is still the parents' income that counts.

If you are not sure what travel costs you can get help with, ask the hospital before you travel.

PEOPLE LIVING IN THE COUNCIL AREAS OF HIGHLAND, ARGYLL & BUTE, WESTERN ISLES, ORKNEY AND SHETLAND

You get help with the cost of travel to hospital for NHS treatment, provided you have to travel at least 30 miles (48km), or more than 5 miles (8km) by sea, to get to hospital.

There is a set maximum you have to pay unless you get free travel, or help with the costs. Leaflet HCS2 tells you how much this is.

WAR PENSIONERS

You get free:

- NHS prescriptions and NHS wigs and fabric supports from a hospital (spinal or abdominal supports or surgical brassiere) if the treatment is for your pensionable disablement and you have a valid war pension exemption certificate.

You may be able to get money back for dental treatment, hospital travel costs, glasses or contact lenses if the treatment, or the reason for travel, is for your pensionable disablement. Write to:

The Treatment Group, Veterans Agency, Norcross, Blackpool FY5 3WP. You can get a pre-paid addressed envelope from Post Offices.

Otherwise, check if you are in any of the groups listed on pages 7 to 11.

PEOPLE FROM ABROAD

People seeking asylum who are supported by the National Asylum Support Services will be sent an NHS charges certificate (HC2) for full help along with their first support payment.

Other people who come from abroad and are accepted as ordinarily resident in the UK (including asylum seekers who have been given leave to remain in the UK and people accepted as coming to work or study in the UK) and who are accepted for NHS treatment, may claim help with health costs in the same way as other residents.

Check to see if you are in one of the groups listed on pages 7 to 11. Otherwise, you can make a claim under the NHS Low Income Scheme – read pages 20 to 22.

FURTHER ADVICE

CLAIMING HELP WHEN YOU GO FOR TREATMENT

CLAIMING FREE PRESCRIPTIONS:

If you don't have to pay, put a cross on the back of your prescription form in the first box in Part 1 that applies to you. Then complete and sign Part 3. You may be asked to show proof of your entitlement to free prescriptions – read page 35 and the tables on pages 46 to 48 for more information about this.

CLAIMING FREE DENTAL TREATMENT:

Tell the dentist you want NHS treatment when you make the appointment. Sign the form you are given when you go for treatment. If you don't have to pay put a cross in the appropriate box. If you have a valid HC2 certificate, write in the certificate number.

If you have a valid HC3 certificate for partial help, write in the certificate number and the maximum amount your certificate says you can pay. You will pay the amount that appears on the certificate, or the actual charge, whichever is less. See leaflet HCS2 for details of charges.

If you have a valid HC3 certificate but your circumstances change before you are asked to pay, read page 8 to see if you are entitled to free NHS dental treatment. You can apply for a review of your NHS Low Income Scheme entitlements at any point by filling in a new HC1 form.

You may be asked to show proof of your entitlement to help with dental costs – read pages 35 and the tables on pages 48 and 50 for more information about this.

NHS VOUCHERS FOR GLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES

Eye examinations are free to those ordinarily resident in the UK or those who belong in one of the categories of exemption from NHS charges set out in the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Scotland) Regulations 1989.

There is more information about using vouchers on the back of your GOS(S)2 patient's optical prescription form.

Ask for a GOS(S)3 voucher form when you have your eye examination, or when you order your glasses or contact lenses or if you are now entitled to one. Not all suppliers have GOS(S)3 vouchers and you might have to go back to the person who undertook your eye examination to get one. Fill in part 1 when you order your glasses or contact lenses and show the optician a valid NHS Low Income Scheme (LIS) certificate for help with health charges if you have one. If you have a valid LIS HC2 certificate you will receive a voucher for the maximum amount.

If you have a valid LIS HC3 certificate, show it to the optician when you order your glasses or contact lenses and ask if you can get any help towards the cost. Your voucher value will be reduced by the amount shown on your HC3.

A GOS(S)3 voucher form is valid for 2 years, but you can only use it if you are still entitled to a voucher for glasses or contact lenses when you order them.

If you have a valid HC2 or HC3 certificate, you must show it to the optician when you order your glasses or contact lenses. You will be asked to fill in and sign GOS(S)3 to say why you are entitled to the voucher and to confirm that you have received your glasses or contact lenses.

REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF GLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES

Ask your optician for form GOS(S)4 – it tells you what to do.

CLAIMING HELP WITH TRAVEL COSTS TO AND FROM HOSPITAL

When you go for treatment, tell the hospital that you want to claim back the cost of your journey and show proof of your entitlement such as your Pension Credit entitlement notice, your NHS tax credit exemption certificate or your LIS HC2 certificate. Also, keep any tickets or receipts you have as proof of the cost.

If you have a valid HC3 certificate and your journeys cost more in total in any one week than your certificate says you have to pay, show the HC3 certificate at the hospital and ask if you are entitled to any money back.

NHS WIGS AND FABRIC SUPPORTS FROM A HOSPITAL (INCLUDING SPINAL OR ABDOMINAL SUPPORTS AND SURGICAL BRASSIERES)

Tell the person who fits your wig or fabric support that you are entitled to it free, and show proof of your entitlement or war pension exemption certificate.

If you have a valid HC3 certificate, show it to the person who fits your wig or fabric support and ask if you are entitled to any help with the charge. For each item, the most you will pay will be the amount on the certificate or the actual cost – whichever is less.

INFORMATION ABOUT CHECKS OF ENTITLEMENT

If you are claiming free treatment or prescriptions, or using an optical voucher, you should show proof of why you don't have to pay or why you can use a voucher, e.g. a benefit book, birth certificate or NHS exemption certificate. For more information about this read the tables on pages 46 onwards.

If you cannot show proof, you will get your NHS treatment or prescription free, or be able to use your optical voucher. However, your treatment form or prescription form will be marked 'no evidence seen' and your entitlement may be checked later.

Please Note:

Patients exempt from NHS prescription charges on age grounds need not produce evidence where their date of birth is specified in an electronic prescription form, or printed by a computer on a non-electronic prescription form.

However, patients exempt on age grounds will still be required to sign the patient declaration on the reverse of the prescription form as confirmation that the medicine or appliance ordered was dispensed.

NHSScotland Counter Fraud Services will check claims for:

- **Free prescriptions.**
- **Full or partial help with NHS dental treatment.**
- **Vouchers towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses.**

HOW TO CLAIM A REFUND

PRESCRIPTION CHARGE REFUNDS

Ask your pharmacist for an NHS receipt and refund form HCS(R) when you pay – you can't get one later. The receipt form tells you what to do.

You have to apply for a refund within 3 months of paying the prescription charge.

PRESCRIPTION PRE-PAYMENT CERTIFICATE (PPC) REFUNDS

You can get a **full** refund if, within the first month of a 4 or 12 month PPC, any of the following happens:

- you become entitled to free prescriptions and, if applicable, you have a valid NHS exemption certificate;

or

- you go into hospital and remain there until the expiry of the certificate;

or

- the PPC holder dies, or goes into hospital and dies there, before the certificate runs out.

Partial refunds: 4 and 12 month PPCs

You can get a proportional refund if, **after** the first month of a 4 or 12 month PPC start date:

- the PPC holder dies;

or

- goes into hospital and dies there before the certificate runs out.

The fee will be refunded proportionally in respect of complete months unexpired.

For example, if a 12 month PPC starts in June and the holder dies in January, the refund will cover February to May and will be 4/12 of the fee paid.

Partial refunds: 12 month PPCs only

You can get a partial refund for 12 month PPCs if, in months 2-4 following the PPC start date, one of the following happens:

- you become entitled to free prescriptions and, if applicable, you have a valid NHS exemption certificate;
- or**
- you go into hospital and remain there until the expiry of the certificate.

Your refund will be the cost of the 12 month PPC less the cost of a 4 month PPC.

TIME LIMIT FOR MAKING PPC REFUND CLAIMS

You must make your claim for a refund within the following time limits:

- **Following the death of the PPC holder:** claim within 24 months of death;
- **If you become entitled to free prescriptions:**
 - 4 month PPC holders: claim within 4 months of the start of the PPC;
 - 12 month PPC holders: claim within 7 months of the start of the PPC;
- **If you go into hospital and remain there until the certificate expires:** claim within 3 months of the PPC expiry date.

Where to send your refund claim

If you wish to claim a refund for any of the reasons set out above, send the original PPC to the Practitioner Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland, telling them the reason why you want to claim a refund. Read the three following paragraphs to find the address you should write to.

For Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Ayrshire & Arran, Dumfries & Galloway, Lanarkshire and the Western Isles write to:

Practitioner Services, Clifton House, Clifton Place, Glasgow G3 7LN.

Tel: 0141 300 1300.

For Borders, Fife, Forth Valley and Lothian write to:

Practitioner Services, PO Box 17363, Edinburgh, EH12 1ET.

Tel: 0131 275 7038.

For Grampian, Highland, Orkney, Shetland and Tayside write to:

Practitioner Services (Medical), Bridge View, 1 North Esplanade West, Aberdeen AB11 5QF.

Tel: 01224 358400.

OTHER REFUNDS

You have to claim a refund within 3 months of paying the health cost.

You will need a receipt which shows you have paid for NHS treatment (see following paragraphs for details). If you are claiming because of low income use form HC5 available from Jobcentre Plus offices or NHS hospitals. Your dentist or optician may have one. The HC5 tells you what to do.

If you want to apply for a refund for other reasons, you will need to write a letter, enclosing your receipt, to your local office of the NHS National Services Scotland Practitioner Services (see addresses on page 38).

NHS DENTAL TREATMENT REFUNDS

Ask your dentist for a NHS receipt form GP17D or a receipt which shows the amount and the date you paid the charge.

If you are claiming on the grounds of low income complete form HC5. The form tells you what to do.

If you want to claim a refund for another reason, e.g. because you receive confirmation that you are pregnant, you will need to explain in writing why you are claiming a refund. Write to: Practitioner Services, NHS National Services Scotland, Gyle Square, 1 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9EB. Enclose your receipt and make sure you include your full name and the address of your dentist.

Practitioner Services of NHS National Services Scotland will check before sending out any payment.

GLASSES OR CONTACT LENS REFUNDS

If you have already used a voucher towards the cost of your glasses or lenses you cannot get a refund, unless it was only a 'complex lens' voucher. Nor can you claim a refund of the difference between the voucher value and the actual cost of your glasses or lenses, even if they cost more than the voucher value.

If you want to claim a refund, ask the person who supplies your glasses or contact lenses for a receipt which shows how much you paid and the date of payment. Complete an HC5 refund form and make sure you enclose your optical prescription and your receipt with your HC5 when you send it off. The form tells you what to do. The maximum refund you can get back will be the voucher value which matches your prescription.

LOST OR DAMAGED GLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES

If your glasses or contact lenses have been lost or damaged and you pay for replacement or repairs, you will only be considered for a refund if you are entitled to a voucher. But, Practitioner Services of NHS National Services Scotland has to agree that the loss or damage was due to illness or disability before payment can be made – read page 26.

HOSPITAL TRAVEL COSTS REFUNDS

Usually, an NHS hospital will give you your refund when you go for treatment. If this is not possible, ask the hospital for an HC5 refund claim form – the form tells you what to do.

REFUNDS FOR WIGS AND FABRIC SUPPORTS

Ask the hospital for a receipt that shows that you have paid an NHS charge. Then complete an HC5 refund claim form, the form tells you what to do.

THE PENALTY CHARGE

Any patient found to have falsely claimed help with health costs will face penalty charges and in some cases prosecution, under powers introduced by the Health Act 1999.

The penalty charge is a civil fine and may be imposed where a patient is found to have falsely claimed total or partial help with health costs. The penalty charge is five times the amount owed, up to a maximum of £100. This is in addition to the original charge. Payment will be pursued by civil recovery if necessary.

THREATENING BEHAVIOUR/ ACTS OF VIOLENCE

Pharmacists may refuse to supply prescribed drugs to persons who commit or threaten to commit violent or criminal acts at the pharmacy. This applies to a person who presents a prescription and anyone accompanying that person.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- **A Quick Guide to Help with Health costs including NHS Charges and Optical Voucher Values (Leaflet HCS2)**
- **Help with Health Costs Low Income Scheme application form HC1**
- **Receipt and Refund Claim form HCS(R):**
for prescription charges
- **Refund Claim Low Income Scheme form HC5:**
for all health costs except prescription charges

HEALTH COSTS ADVICE LINES

For further information about the NHS Low Income Scheme telephone 0845 850 1166.

NHS TAX CREDIT EXEMPTION CERTIFICATES

Telephone enquiries to Patient Services of the BSA, please telephone: 0845 609 9299. Please have your tax credit award notice ready to answer questions.

The BSA does not deal with enquiries about tax credit applications or entitlement to an award notice. Any enquiries about entitlement to Tax Credit should go to:

HM Revenue & Customs – Tax Credit helpline

For enquiries about applications or entitlement to Tax Credit Award Notices:

Tel: 0845 300 3900.

For people with hearing or speech difficulties:

Tel: 0845 300 3909.

OTHER HEALTH ADVICE

NHSScotland offers a 24-hour confidential nurse advice and health information service called NHS 24.

Telephone NHS 24 on: 0845 4 24 24 24.

Please note: NHS 24 does not deal with tax credit queries.

PROOF OF ENTITLEMENT TABLES

The tables on the following pages show who can get free NHS prescriptions and treatment. They also set out what proof of entitlement you need to have and how to get proof.

There are separate tables for free prescriptions, free dental treatment and optical vouchers.

For free prescriptions – see pages 46 to 48.

For free dental treatment – see pages 49 and 50.

For optical vouchers – see pages 51 to 53.

Free NHS prescriptions

You can get free prescriptions if you are:	The proof you need to have	Where and how to get proof
60 or over Under 16	A date-of-birth printed on your prescription. If it is not on your prescription, show your NHS medical card, current Child Benefit order book, Pension book, passport, birth certificate, driving licence, or any other official papers showing your name and date-of-birth.	NHS medical cards are issued when you are first registered as a patient with a GP. If you need a card, contact your local NHS Board.
Aged 16-18 in full-time education	A current Child Benefit order book or evidence of age as above and a letter or other document from your school, college or university stating that you are a full-time student.	The Child Benefit Centre. 0845 302 1444. Your school, college, university or local education authority can give you proof that you are in qualifying full-time education (see page 12).
Named on a valid maternity exemption certificate	A valid maternity exemption certificate. (This will be issued to you if you are pregnant or have had a baby in the previous 12 months.)	Ask your GP, midwife or health visitor for an FW8 application form. The form tells you what to do.
Named on a valid medical exemption certificate	A valid medical exemption certificate. (This will be issued to you only if you have a qualifying medical condition – see pages 23 to 25.)	Ask your GP or NHS hospital for an EC92A application form. The form tells you what to do.
Named on a valid war pension exemption certificate	A war pension exemption certificate.	Write to: The Veterans Agency, Norcross, Blackpool FY5 3WP.

Free NHS prescriptions

You can get free prescriptions if:	The proof you need to have	Where and how to get proof
You are named on a valid prescription prepayment certificate	A valid prescription prepayment certificate (PPC).	Purchase a PPC at participating pharmacies or dispensing doctor surgeries. Or apply by post – (see page 24).
You are named on a valid HC2 certificate	A valid NHS Low income Scheme certificate HC2 for full help with health costs.	Make a claim using form HC1, obtainable from your Jobcentre Plus office or by calling 0845 850 1166. You may also be able to get an HC1 from your local hospital, dentist, optician or doctor.
You are, or your partner is, getting Income Support	Your Income Support order book, or an entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus Office.	You have to claim the benefit at your Jobcentre Plus office (the address will be in your local telephone book).
You are, or your partner is getting income-related Employment and Support Allowance	Your entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus office.	Your Jobcentre Plus office will send you a letter of entitlement.
You are, or your partner is, getting Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance	An entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus office.	If payments are made into your bank or building society, you can obtain proof in the form of an entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus office.
You are, or your partner is, getting Pension Credit guarantee credit	Your Pension Credit award notice from the Department of Work and Pensions, Pension Services.	If you have lost or mislaid your Pension Service award notice, contact the Pension Service phone line on 0845 606 0265.

Free NHS prescriptions

You can get free prescriptions if:	The proof you need to have	Where and how to get proof
You are entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate	A valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate.	If you are eligible for free prescriptions, your exemption certificate will be sent to you. See page 22 if you haven't yet received your certificate.

Free NHS dental treatment

You can get free dental treatment if you:	The proof you need to have	Where and how to get proof
Are under 18 years old	Any official document showing your name and date-of-birth such as a birth certificate, NHS medical card, passport, travel concession card, or any other official papers showing your name and date-of-birth.	NHS medical cards are given out when you are first registered as a patient with a GP. If you need a card, contact your local NHS Board.
Are aged 18 and in full-time education	A current Child Benefit order book. If you do not get Child Benefit, you can show proof of your date of birth and proof that you are a full-time student.	If you do not have an order book, contact the Child Benefit Centre: 0845 302 1444. Your school, college, university or local education authority can give you proof that you are in qualifying full-time education (see page 12).
Are named on a valid maternity exemption certificate	MatB1 certificate or NHS prescription maternity exemption certificate.	MatB1 certificates are issued by your GP or registered midwife. You can use your prescription maternity exemption certificate as proof. To get one ask your GP, midwife or health visitor for an FW8 application form. The form tells you what to do.
Have had a baby in the previous 12 months, or have had a stillborn baby in the previous 12 months	Notification of birth form, birth certificate or stillbirth certificate.	The midwife who delivers your baby will give you a notification of birth form. Birth certificates and stillbirth certificates are issued by your local registrar of births, marriages and deaths.

Free NHS dental treatment

You can get free dental treatment if:	The proof you need to have	Where and how to get proof
You are named on a valid HC2 certificate	An NHS certificate HC2 for full help with health costs.	Make a claim using form HC1, obtainable from your Jobcentre Plus office or by calling 0845 850 1166. You may also be able to get an HC1 from your local hospital, dentist, optician or doctor.
You are named on a valid HC3 certificate	The charge may be reduced if you are named on an NHS certificate HC3 for partial help with health costs.	
You are, or your partner is, getting Income Support	Your Income Support order book, or an entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus Office.	You have to claim the benefit at your Jobcentre Plus office (the address will be in your local telephone book).
You are, or your partner is getting income-related Employment and Support Allowance	An entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus office.	Your Jobcentre Plus office will send you a letter of entitlement.
You are, or your partner is, getting Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance	An entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus office.	If payments are made into your bank or building society, you can obtain proof in the form of an entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus office.
You are, or your partner is, getting Pension Credit guarantee credit	Pension Credit award notice from the Department of Work and Pensions, Pension Services.	If you have lost or mislaid your Pension Service award notice, contact the Pension Service phone line on 0845 606 0265.
You are, or your partner is, getting tax credits and meeting qualifying conditions	A valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate.	If you are eligible for free dental treatment, your exemption certificate will be sent to you. See page 22 if you haven't yet received your certificate.

NHS optical vouchers

You can get optical vouchers if you are:	The proof you need to have	Where and how to get proof
Aged 60 or over	Any official document showing your name and date-of-birth such as a birth certificate, NHS medical card, passport, travel concession card, driving licence, state retirement pension book.	To get a new NHS medical card you should contact your NHS Board.
Aged 40 or over and the parent, brother, sister, or child of a person with glaucoma	An official document to prove your date of birth – see above.	NHS medical card – see above.
Registered blind or partially sighted	Certificate of registration as blind or partially sighted.	Contact your local authority.
Suffering from diabetes	Repeat prescriptions card, out-patients appointment card, record of blood sugar readings.	Your GP or your hospital diabetic or eye clinic. Your repeat prescription or outpatient card should show you are attending a diabetic clinic on a regular basis.
Suffering from glaucoma	Statement that you are a glaucoma sufferer.	Your GP or your hospital eye clinic.
Considered to be at risk of glaucoma	A letter from the ophthalmologist.	Your GP or your hospital eye clinic.

NHS optical vouchers

You can get optical vouchers if:	The proof you need to have	Where and how to get proof
You are aged under 16	A Child Benefit order book, NHS medical card, passport, birth certificate, travel concession card, showing your name and date of birth.	If you do not have an order book, contact the Child Benefit Centre: 0845 302 1444. To get a new NHS medical card contact your NHS Board.
You are aged 16, 17 or 18 and in full-time education	A current Child Benefit order book, or evidence of age as above and a letter or other document from your school, college or university stating that you are a full-time student.	If you do not have an order book, contact the Child Benefit Centre: 0845 302 1444. Your school, college, university or your local education authority can give you proof that you are in qualifying full-time education (see page 12).
You are, or your partner is, getting Income Support	Your Income Support order book, or an entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus office.	You have to claim the benefit at your Jobcentre Plus office (the address will be in your in local telephone book).
You are, or your partner is getting income-related Employment and Support Allowance	An entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus office.	Your Jobcentre Plus office will send you a letter of entitlement.
You are, or your partner is, getting income-based Jobseeker's Allowance	An entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus office.	If payments are made into your bank or building society, you can obtain proof in the form of an entitlement letter from your Jobcentre Plus office.
You are, or your partner is, getting Pension Credit guarantee credit	Your Pension Credit award notice from the Department of Work and Pensions, Pension Services	If you have lost or mislaid your Pension Service award notice, contact the Pension Service phone line on 0845 606 0265

NHS optical vouchers

You can get optical vouchers if:	The proof you need to have	Where and how to get proof
You are, or your partner is, getting tax credits and meeting qualifying conditions	You are entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate.	If you are eligible for free treatment, you will be sent a certificate. See page 22 if you haven't received a certificate yet.
You are named on a valid HC2 certificate	An NHS certificate HC2 for full help with health costs.	Make a claim using form HC1, obtainable from your Jobcentre Plus office or by calling 0845 850 1166. You may also be able to get one from your local hospital, dentist, optician or GP.

