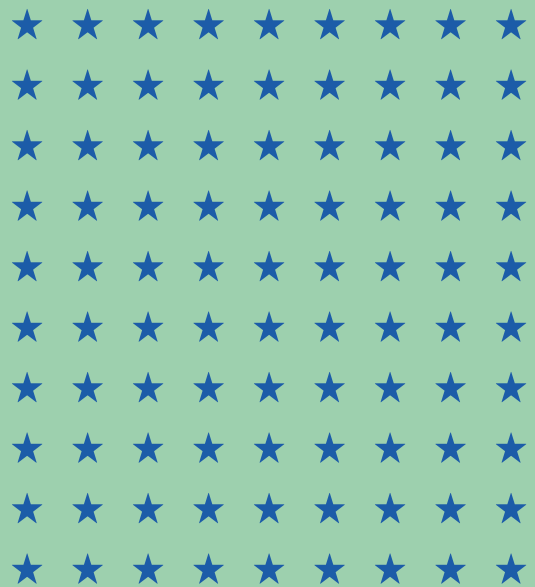


# Can you claim free NHS prescriptions?

**Not everyone can  
claim free NHS  
prescriptions  
in England.**

Check if you're eligible at  
[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check)



Check before you tick



# Can you claim free NHS prescriptions?

## Not everyone can claim free NHS prescriptions in England.

Checks are made on free NHS prescriptions to prevent and detect fraud and error. If you claim free prescriptions you're not entitled to, you could have to pay a penalty charge of up to £100.

Check if you're eligible at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check)

# What entitles you to free NHS prescriptions?

## Your age

You're entitled to free NHS prescriptions if you're:

- under 16
- 16, 17, or 18 and in full-time education
- 60 or over

Students aged 19 and over aren't automatically entitled to free NHS prescriptions, but can apply for help through the NHS Low Income Scheme, which is explained further later.

# Certain benefits

Not all benefits entitle you to free NHS prescriptions. Check which type of benefit you get before you claim free NHS prescriptions.

You're entitled to free NHS prescriptions if you are named on an award for:

- Income Support
- **income-based** Jobseeker's Allowance
- **income-related** Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit (**Guarantee Credit**) paid on its own, or Pension Credit (**Guarantee Credit with Savings Credit**)
- certain Tax Credits - we tell you more about this in the 'NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate' section
- Universal Credit - but only if earnings in your last assessment period were **£435** or less, or **£935** or less if you get an element for a child or have limited capability for work

You're **not automatically entitled** to free NHS prescriptions if you are named on an award for:

- **contribution-based** Jobseeker's Allowance, paid on its own
- **contribution-based** Employment and Support Allowance, paid on its own
- Pension Credit (**Savings Credit**), paid on its own
- any benefit paid on its own and not listed in the previous section (such as State Pension, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Incapacity Benefit)

## Certificates

You're entitled to free NHS prescriptions if you have one of these certificates.

### **NHS maternity exemption certificate**

If you're pregnant or have given birth in the last 12 months you can claim free NHS prescriptions if you have a valid **maternity exemption certificate**. Ask your doctor, midwife or health visitor to apply.

## **NHS medical exemption certificate**

If you have a medical condition or physical disability, you are only entitled to free NHS prescriptions if you have a valid **medical exemption certificate**.

Check the medical conditions list at **[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/medex](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/medex)** or check with your doctor. If you're eligible for a medical exemption certificate, ask your doctor how to apply.

## **NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate**

You will automatically be sent this certificate if your annual family income used to work out your tax credits is **£15,276** or less and you get:

- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit including a disability element
- Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit paid together

Your partner and any young people included in your claim will be entitled to free prescriptions while your certificate is valid. For more information, go to:

**[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/taxcredits](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/taxcredits)**

## **HC2 certificate (full help with health costs)**

If you're not automatically eligible for free NHS prescriptions, you can apply for help through the NHS Low Income Scheme.

If you have applied and been issued with an HC2 certificate you are entitled to free NHS prescriptions.

Your partner and any dependant children under 19 named on your claim will also be entitled to free NHS prescriptions while the certificate is valid. Make sure you know the expiry date of the certificate.

An HC3 certificate (partial help with health costs) does not entitle you to free NHS prescriptions.

Find out more and how to apply at  
**[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/lowincomescheme](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/lowincomescheme)**

## **War pensioners**

If you have a valid War Pension or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme exemption certificate or a prescription exemption certificate issued by the Ministry of Defence, you are entitled to free NHS prescriptions that relate to your accepted disability.

To apply for a certificate, contact Veterans UK:

Call: 0808 1914 218

Email: [veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk](mailto:veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk)

## **NHS Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC)**

If you pay for your NHS prescriptions, you could save money by buying a 3 or 12 month PPC. A PPC covers all your NHS prescriptions for a set price.

If you have a valid 3 or 12 month PPC you can claim free NHS prescriptions.

For more information or to buy a PPC go to  
**[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc)**



## **NHS Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) PPC**

If you pay for NHS prescriptions for HRT, you could save money by buying an HRT PPC. An HRT PPC covers an unlimited number of listed HRT medicines for 12 months.

If you have a valid HRT PPC you can claim free HRT prescriptions that are covered by the certificate.

For more information or to buy an HRT PPC go to  
**[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/hrt-ppc](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/hrt-ppc)**

# What to do at the pharmacy

Before you claim free NHS prescriptions check that you're entitled at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check)

## If you are not entitled to free NHS prescriptions

If you know that you're not entitled to free NHS prescriptions, or your exemption certificate, PPC or HRT PPC has expired, **don't claim**. Pharmacy staff will tell you how much you need to pay.

## Not sure?

If you're not sure whether you're entitled to free NHS prescriptions (or you're waiting to find out) you should pay and ask pharmacy staff for an NHS receipt and refund form (FP57).

If you find out later that you are entitled and have proof, you can apply for a refund within three months of paying the charge. The FP57 will tell you what to do.

## **If you are entitled to free NHS prescriptions**

Make sure you tick the right box on the prescription.

If someone else collects the prescription on your behalf, make sure they know which box to tick.

If pharmacy staff ask for proof that you don't have to pay, show your benefit entitlement or award letter, or your exemption certificate.

# Free medications

These medications are free for everyone:

- prescribed contraceptives
- medicines supplied at an NHS clinic or hospital for the treatment of:
  - a mental disorder (for people with a supervised community treatment order)
  - tuberculosis
- any medicine administered at an NHS hospital

## Still not sure if you're allowed to claim free NHS prescriptions?

Use the NHS eligibility checker to find out if you're eligible for free NHS prescriptions and other help with health costs.

It takes less than 5 minutes.

Go to [www.nhs.uk/eligibility-checker](https://www.nhs.uk/eligibility-checker)

# **For more information**

## **NHS Help with Health Costs**

[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/healthcosts](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/healthcosts)

Contact us at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/contact-us](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/contact-us)

## **Prescription Exemption Checking Service (penalty charges)**

Call: 0300 330 9291

Next Generation Text: 18001 0300 330 9291

## **Medical and maternity exemption certificate**

[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/medex](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/medex)

[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/matex](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/matex)

Call: 0300 330 1341

Next Generation Text: 18001 0300 330 1341

## **NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate**

[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/taxcredits](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/taxcredits)

Call: 0300 330 1347

Next Generation Text: 18001 0300 330 1347

## **NHS Low Income Scheme**

[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/lowincomescheme](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/lowincomescheme)

Call: 0300 330 1343

Next Generation Text: 18001 0300 330 1343

## **Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC)**

[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc)

Call: 0300 330 1341

Next Generation Text: 18001 0300 330 1341

## **Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) PPC**

[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/hrt-ppc](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/hrt-ppc)

Call: 0300 330 2089

## **Benefits information**

[www.gov.uk/dwp](http://www.gov.uk/dwp)

## **Pension Service helpline**

Call: 0800 731 0469

Textphone: 0800 731 0464

Next Generation Text: 18001 0800 731 0469

## **Jobcentre Plus helpline**

Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance

Call: 0800 169 0310

Next Generation Textphone: 0800 169 0314

Next Generation Text: 18001 0800 169 0310

## **Jobcentre Plus helpline**

Universal Credit live service

Call: 0800 328 9344

Textphone: 0800 328 1344

Next Generation Text: 18001 0800 328 9344

## **Universal Credit full service**

Call: 0800 328 5644

Textphone: 0800 328 1344

Next Generation Text: 18001 0800 328 5644

## **Tax Credits helpline**

Call: 0345 300 3900

Next Generation Text: 18001 0300 200 3100



If you would like this information in a different format  
visit: **[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/freeprescriptions](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/freeprescriptions)**

Call: 0300 330 9291

Next Generation Text: 18001 0300 330 9291

The information in this guide was correct as of April 2023.

The latest version is available at  
**[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/freeprescriptions](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/freeprescriptions)**

© Crown Copyright 2023

Produced by the NHS Business Services Authority