**NHS Penalty Charges**

**Welcome to the NHS Business Services Authority Knowledge Base, the place to ask us anything you need to know**

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**What would you like to know?**

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**Document**Am I entitled to free NHS prescriptions if I am in receipt of Universal Credit?

Being named on or in receipt of Universal Credit can entitle you to free NHS prescriptions, however this depends on your Universal Credit award.  
   
More information can be found below. Further guidance regarding all benefits is available on the [**GOV.UK website**](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits).  
  
   
**Prescriptions collected on or after 1 December 2016**  
   
To be entitled to claim free NHS prescriptions you must be receiving Universal Credit, either as a single person or as a member of a couple, **and**:

1. for the last complete assessment period\* you and your partner (if you have one) had either no earnings or net earnings\*\* of £435.00 or less. **Or;**
2. for the last complete assessment period\* you and your partner (if you have one) had either no earnings or net earnings\*\* of £935.00 or less, **and** had a child element included in your award or had limited capability for work

You would also be entitled if you are a dependent child or qualifying young person of someone who meets the above criteria in paragraph (b).  
  
Your Universal Credit statement can be shown as evidence to receive free NHS prescriptions if you meet the above criteria. It is your responsibility to check your entitlement before signing any declaration to claim free NHS prescriptions.  
  
If the prescription you are signing does not have an option for Universal Credit, you should tick the box for income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance.  
  
You are making a declaration of entitlement based on your last complete Universal Credit assessment period. You cannot claim free NHS prescriptions if you do not meet the qualifying criteria, regardless of whether you expect to meet this criteria at the end of your current assessment period. You should pay and request an FP57 receipt, then claim a refund if you meet the qualifying criteria once your current assessment period has finished.  
  
*\*Your assessment period will run for a calendar month from the date of your claim for Universal Credit (this will be on your statement), and between the same dates each month after that.  
   
\*\*Your net earnings are referred to as ‘Take-home pay’ on your Universal Credit statement.*  
   
   
**Prescriptions collected prior to 1 December 2016**  
   
To be entitled to claim free NHS prescriptions you must have been receiving Universal Credit, either as a single person or as a member of a couple, **and**:

1. during the assessment period\* your costs are incurred, you had either no earnings or net earnings\*\* of £435.00 or less. **Or;**
2. during the assessment period\* your costs are incurred, you had either no earnings or net earnings\*\* of £935.00 or less, **and** had one or more of the additional elements\*\*\* included in your award

You would also be entitled if you are a dependent child or qualifying young person of someone who meets the above criteria in paragraph (b).  
   
If you claimed Universal Credit as a couple, the earning limits are per individual and not a combined limit. If one person in a couple had earned less than the limit, that person would have qualified, however the other person would not if they had earned over the limit.  
  
It is your responsibility to check your entitlement before signing any declaration to claim your free NHS prescriptions.  
   
*\* Your assessment period will run for a calendar month from the date of your claim for Universal Credit (this will be on your statement), and between the same dates each month after that.  
   
\*\* Your net earnings are referred to as ‘Take-home pay’ on your Universal Credit statement.  
   
\*\*\* Additional elements are the:*

* *Child element*
* *Limited capability for work element (LCW)*
* *Limited capability for work or work related activity element (LCWRA)*

**Check what help you could get to pay for NHS costs**  
   
You can check what help you could get on our [**website**](https://services.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check-for-help-paying-nhs-costs/start).