

National Health and Care Service (General) Scheme 2017 public consultation – frequently asked questions

Are the changes definitely happening?

No, nothing is finalised. The changes proposed are exactly that – proposals – and the Department of Health and Social Care would like to hear your views. That's why there is a formal public consultation running until Tuesday 12 September. You can find out more online at <http://consult.gov.im> or you can request a hard copy of the consultation document by telephoning 642627.

Any changes the Department takes forward will be brought before Tynwald, the Island's parliament, and will require the support of a majority of Members of Tynwald.

How can I make my views known to the Department of Health and Social Care?

You can submit your views in writing either via email to colin.brew@gov.im or by letter addressed to: NHCS Act General Scheme Consultation, Crookall House, Demesne Road, Douglas, IM1 3QA. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday 12 September 2017.

How can we find out if any changes are made to the proposals and whether they are going ahead?

The Department of Health and Social Care will publish a summary of responses within six weeks of the consultation ending at <http://consult.gov.im> and would also set out its intentions at that time.

Is a consultation the same as a referendum?

No. The purpose of consultation is not to be a referendum but an information, views and evidence gathering exercise from which to take an informed decision on the content of proposed legislation or policy.

What about people who might struggle to contribute towards the costs of their prescriptions, dental treatment and sight tests?

Individuals who may be unable to pay for several prescription items would be best advised to consider purchasing a pre-payment certificate (at either £60 per annum or £20 per 4 months - approx. £5 per month).

However, anybody who is unable to claim exemption under any of the criteria in the Scheme (e.g. through benefits), and is genuinely unable to afford the charges, will still be able to apply to the Department for a review of their case. These applications will be considered on a case by case basis. The Department's proposals are not aimed at charging those who are on very low incomes and for whom paying £5 per month for prescriptions would be prohibitive.

Why doesn't Government determine an individual's ability to pay (means test) a contribution towards their prescriptions, dental treatment and sight tests?

Means testing proposals are in development through the Cabinet Office but this is a complex piece of work which will still take a significant amount of time to deliver. The Department is not in a position to wait on the conclusion of this work as prescription charges and dental charges have not been reviewed or increased for some time. Prescription charges were last increased in 2010 and dental charges in April 2015.

Exemptions from contributions

Would everyone have to contribute towards the costs of their prescriptions, dental treatment and sight tests?

No. A range of people would be exempt and would therefore receive their prescriptions, dental treatment and sight tests free of charge:

- Those aged under 16 years of age or under 19 years of age in full-time education
- Those aged 75 and over
- Those in receipt of income support, jobseeker's allowance, incapacity benefit, employed person's allowance, or a war disablement pension
- Those who are in prison

People who are not exempt but feel that paying prescription charges would be prohibitive to them will be able to ask the Department to review their case. These applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

Would people have to pay for contraception (e.g. 'the pill')?

No. Contraceptives will remain free of charge.

Would people on benefits have to contribute towards the costs of their prescriptions, dental treatment and sight tests?

No. Those in receipt of income support, jobseeker's allowance, incapacity benefit, employed person's allowance, or a war disablement pension would be exempt from making a contribution and would therefore receive their prescriptions, dental treatment and sight tests free of charge.

Would parents/carers have to contribute towards the costs of their child's prescriptions, dental treatment and sight tests?

No. Those aged under 16 years of age or under 19 years of age in full-time education would be exempt from making a contribution and would therefore receive their prescriptions, dental treatment and sight tests free of charge.

Would people who receive a state pension have to contribute towards the costs of their prescriptions, dental treatment and sight tests?

Those in receipt of state pension and below the age of 75 would have to make a contribution unless they were in receipt of one of the other exempt benefits.

Those aged 75 and over would be exempt from making a contribution and would therefore receive their prescriptions, dental treatment and sight tests free of charge.

Prescription pre-payment certificates

What is a prescription pre-payment certificate?

Prescription pre-payment certificates have a fixed up-front cost but then entitle you to all of your prescriptions free of charge, for as long as the certificate is valid. You can purchase a certificate to cover a period of four months or 12 months.

How much does a pre-payment certificate cost?

A four month certificate costs £20 and a 12 month certificate costs £60. For an annual certificate that's less than 17 pence a day or about £1.15 a week to cover all of your prescriptions.

Can I spread the cost of a prescription pre-payment certificate?

The Department of Health and Social Care is exploring options for Direct Debit or standing order to help people spread the cost their prescription pre-payment certificate.

Other

What is the level of contribution people, who are not exempt, have to pay towards the cost of their prescriptions, dental treatment and sight tests in England?

Prescriptions	England	Isle of Man (proposed)
Prescription	£8.60 per item	£5.00 per item
3 month prescription pre-payment certificate	£29.10	n/a
4 month prescription pre-payment certificate	n/a	£20.00
Annual prescription pre-payment certificate	£104.00	£60.00

Dental treatment	England	Isle of Man (proposed)
Band 1 - Diagnosis, treatment planning and maintenance	£20.60	£20.60
Band 2 - Treatment	£56.30	£56.30
Band 3 - Provision of Appliances	£244.30	£244.30

Sight tests	England	Isle of Man (proposed)
Cost of a sight test	£25.00	£10.00