**NHS Northamptonshire ICB Pilot Scheme - Funding of prepayment prescription certificates for care leavers aged 16 to 25 years who are not entitled to free prescriptions under current exemptions.**

**Background.**

There is extensive evidence of poorer health outcomes for care experienced children and young people. Research highlights that they are more likely to suffer from mental and physical health issues, in both the short and long-term, than their non-care experienced peers.

Access to appropriate healthcare and treatment can be compounded by the financial struggles experienced as young people leaving care face additional inequalities such as the financial constraints which may result as they move into independent living.

**Prescription Charges for Care Leavers.**

One extra burden for care leavers who do not meet the criteria for NHS exemption from prescription charges is the cost of prescription charges which is currently £9.65 per item. Many of these young people do not have access to funds from extended family, supporting them with daily living costs; the additional cost of a prescription may cause further financial hardship and may result in the prescription not being collected and health needs not being met.

Many care leavers will be already eligible for exemption from prescription charge. This includes those who are:

* Aged 16, 17 or 18 and in fulltime education
* Expectant mothers or those who have given birth in the previous 12 months .
* People with certain medical conditions or continuing physical disability that meets the criteria for a medical exemption certificate
* People who are receiving certain benefits or who are included in the award of someone receiving certain benefits.
* People who meet the NHS Low Income Scheme Requirements.

However, young people who are in employment or apprenticeships may not meet these criteria. In these circumstances, an application can be made to NHS Northamptonshire ICB for a prepayment certificate which will cover the cost of prescriptions for one year.

**Implementation:**

The Pilot scheme will run for one year from 01 April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

Leaving Care Workers/ Personal Advisors will play a key role is assisting care leavers to identify whether they are already entitled to free prescriptions and supporting in the completion of the relevant application form.

If the care leaver is exempt from prescription charges, because of a reason listed above, the free prescription should be obtained by applying for the appropriate exemption e.g., HC2 certificate. Eligibility for exemption can be checked at: [Check what help you could get to pay for NHS costs - NHSBSA](https://check-for-help-paying-nhs-costs.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/start)

If the young person is eligible for free prescriptions under one of the national criteria, they may be exempt from other charges, such as dental treatment charges.

For those not entitled under the current list of exemptions, care leavers can apply for a prepayment prescription certificate via NHS Northamptonshire ICB using the following process:

**Northamptonshire ICB Care Leaver Prescription Process**

**I am a:**

* Northamptonshire Care Leaver
* Aged 16-25
* Not currently eligible for free prescriptions

**COMPLETE FORM**

**Support to complete the application form can be provided by the young person’s Personal Advisor or Northamptonshire Leaving Care Service.**

**The form can be found on the Northamptonshire ICB website:**

<https://www.icnorthamptonshire.org.uk/updates/care-leaver-prescription-prepayment-certificate-11308>

**EMAIL COMPLETED FORM TO:**

northantsicb.lookedafterchildrensafeguarding@nhs.net

 FORM RECEIVED BY ICB DESIGNATED NURSE FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

Application processed.

Certificate will be emailed directly to young person.

Confirmation email sent from the ICB to young person.

Young person shows certificate on collection of prescriptions.