



REFUNDS

You can claim a refund of charges for an item that you should have got free, or at a reduced cost if you claim within three months of paying the charge although the time limit can be extended if you can show that you have good cause for applying late-for example illness.

Refunds of prescription charges can be claimed on form FP 57 – for other items and services you should apply for a refund on form HC5. Forms are available from Jobcentre Plus Offices or N.H.S. hospitals or by telephoning 0845 8501166. Claims must be accompanied by receipts or other evidence to show you have paid the charge.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS/CLOTHING GRANTS

Children are entitled to free School Meals if their families receive

- Income Support or Job-Seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit whose annual income is lower than £15,575 and are not getting Working Tax Credit.

Contact your Local Education Authority for details of how to apply.

Clothing Grants for School Uniform or other school clothes can sometimes be given. Each Local Authority defines its own rules.

www.hope.ac.uk



IF YOU WANT ANY FURTHER INFORMATION or advice on any aspect of Social Security Benefits while studying contact student services to make an appointment with the Student Welfare/Benefit Adviser: 0151-291-3813.



April 08 – March 09

Health/Education Benefits Free School Meals

Students and Social Security Benefits





Students and Social Security Benefits

WHAT ARE HEALTH BENEFITS

Although most health treatment is free under the NHS for UK residents, some charges are levied on the public for NHS services and treatments. These include;

- Prescriptions;
- Sight tests;
- Glasses or Contact Lenses;
- Dental Treatment;
- Wigs or Fabric Support;
- Milk and Vitamins;
- Travel Costs;

Students who are under 19 and in full-time education receive free prescriptions, free sight tests, free dental treatment and free wigs/fabric supports.

Other students generally qualify for free health care via two routes-by being in receipt of a qualifying benefit or on the grounds of low-income.

QUALIFYING BENEFITS

You are exempt from these charges if:

- you or a member of your family are receiving income support, income based job seekers allowance, or the guarantee credit of pension credit or from October 08 income based employment and support allowance.

OR you or your partner are receiving:

- Child Tax Credit.
- Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.
- Working Tax Credit including a disability or severe disability element – **AND**
- your gross annual income as calculated by the Revenue for tax credit purposes at the time of your last tax credit award, does not exceed £15,050.

If you qualify on the grounds of receiving Income Support, J.S.A. or Tax Credits etc you should inform

dental/optical staff or tick the box at the back of the prescription form.

If you qualify on the grounds of receiving Tax Credits the Revenue should inform the Prescription Pricing Authority of the Health Benefits Division which should then send you an exemption certificate which is normally valid until the end of the tax year. The certificate is supposed to be sent out automatically but where students come off Income Support when they come to university and claim Tax Credits instead, the Inland Revenue need to be notified of the change in circumstances to action the release of the exemption certificate.

REDUCED COST TREATMENT – THE LOW INCOME SCHEME

If you do not qualify for free treatment, you may qualify for full help or reduced cost health-care treatment on the grounds of low income. To apply for remission of charges, you need to complete form HC1 (obtained from D.W.P. offices, post offices, and doctors surgeries/health centres) and send it to the Health Benefits division of the Prescription Pricing Authority.

If your income is low enough to qualify for free services you will be sent a certificate HC2, and if you qualify for partial remission of charges you will be sent a certificate HC3. Certificates normally last for 6 months or 12 months if you are 60 or over or are disabled. Sometimes students are issued with a certificate until the end of the academic year. You should make a repeat claim on Form HC1 shortly before the expiry date. Changes in circumstances do not affect the validity of the certificate but if the change could result in increased help, you can re-apply for a fresh assessment before the certificate expires.

ACCESSING HEALTH BENEFITS-PROOF OF ENTITLEMENT

You will normally be asked for proof that you are entitled to full and partial help with charges, but should not be denied the item or service if you are unable to provide the required evidence. If you have a HC2 or HC3 certificate this needs to

be shown – in other cases you may need to show other evidence such as date of birth, student status, tax credit exemption certificate, benefit order book or benefit award letter.

OTHER WAYS OF ACCESSING FREE/REDUCED COST HEALTH BENEFITS

There are other ways of receiving free help with certain health benefits such as ;-

Prescriptions, Dental treatment, Sight tests and glasses, Travel costs, Free wigs and Fabric supports

Generally these are:-

- Aged 60 or over
- Under 16 or under 19 and in full-time education.
- Pregnant or have given birth in the last 12 months

Each health benefit has specific conditions of entitlement so it is worth checking to see if you qualify for help.

PRE-PAYMENT CERTIFICATES

If you need to purchase a lot of prescriptions but are not exempted by any other method you can buy a pre-payment certificate for four months or a year. This works out cheaper than buying individual items if you need more than five prescriptions in four months or more than 14 items in a year. Claim a certificate on form FP95 available from chemists and most doctors' surgeries and relevant bodies. Applications can also be made by telephone on 0845 850 0030 or online at www.ppa.org.uk