

# HELP WITH HEALTH COSTS

## Exemption Checking Guide



Ophthalmic

A patient is entitled if they are named on an award of:	Suitable Evidence
Income Support	A <b>full award letter</b> from the Jobs and Benefit Office confirming that the patient is named or included in an award of Income Support on the date(s) of treatment.
<b>Income-related</b> Employment and Support Allowance	A <b>full award letter</b> from the Jobs and Benefit Office confirming that the patient is named or included in an award of <b>Income-related</b> Employment and Support Allowance on the date(s) of treatment.
<b>Income-based</b> Jobseeker's Allowance	A <b>full award letter</b> from the Jobs and Benefit Office confirming that the patient is named or included in an award of <b>Income-based</b> Jobseekers Allowance on the date(s) of treatment.
Pension Credit <b>Guarantee Credit</b>	A <b>full award letter</b> from the Pension Service confirming that the patient is named or included in an award of Pension Credit <b>Guarantee Credit</b> on the date(s) of treatment.
NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate	A NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate <b>with the patient's name</b> on it, valid on the date(s) of treatment.
HC2 Certificate	A HC2 certificate <b>with the patient's name</b> on it, which is valid on the date(s) of treatment.
HC3 Certificate (partial assistance)	A HC3 certificate <b>with the patient's name</b> on it, which is valid on the date(s) of treatment and shows the maximum amount the patient is to pay towards their treatment charge.
A patient is entitled if they are :	Suitable Evidence
Under 16	Any official document showing their <b>name and date of birth</b> , such as a birth certificate, medical card or passport.
Aged 16, 17 or 18 and in full time education	Proof that the patient is a <b>full-time</b> student e.g. a copy of a letter from the school or college.
Aged 60 years or over	Any official document showing their <b>name and date of birth</b> , such as a birth certificate, medical card or passport.

**\*NOTE Universal Credit on its own is currently not a qualifying benefit. Patients must have a valid HC2 certificate.**

For further information and guidance on entitlement call the  
**HSC Patient Charges Advice Line on 0800 5878 982**

# HELP WITH HEALTH COSTS

Are your patients entitled?



Ophthalmic

If your patients claim free NHS ophthalmic treatment that they're not entitled to, they could be facing penalty charges of up to £150 – as well as the original treatment charge. By following the guidance below, you can protect both your patients and health service funds.

## Do

✓	Ensure that point of treatment checks are carried out and that staff carrying out these checks are familiar with exemption criteria.
✓	Request supporting evidence as this acts as an effective deterrent to those simply trying to avoid payment. e.g. an entitlement letter from the Jobs and Benefit Office, a valid award notice from the Pension Service, a valid NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate. If proof is not provided tick the 'evidence not seen' box and ask the patient to bring it on their next visit.
✓	Ensure that the correct exemption category is accurately recorded on the claim form. Failure to do so may result in unnecessary exemption checks by the BSO and incorrect letters being issued to patients.
✓	Ask patients to confirm that the personal details you hold for them are correct.
✓	Display Help with Health Costs materials and encourage patients to read the supporting materials before making a declaration.

## Do Not

✗	Do not prompt patients as to which benefit(s) they may be in receipt of. Patients should only be advised as to which benefits qualify for help with health costs.
✗	Do not assume that a patient on Employment and Support Allowance, Jobseeker's Allowance or Pension Credit is automatically exempt. There are two types of each of these benefits, one qualifying and one non-qualifying.
✗	Do not assume that a patient who was previously exempt from charges is still entitled – circumstances change.
✗	Do not assume that someone who does not work is automatically entitled.
✗	Do not assume that a person with a disability is automatically entitled.
✗	Do not sign the form on behalf of the patient, the declaration is the patient's agreement to receive NHS ophthalmic treatment.
✗	Do not turn a blind eye. If you suspect that a patient is intentionally misclaiming help with health costs, call the HSC Fraud Hotline on 0800 096 33 96.