



Department
of Health &
Social Care

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Our ref: TO-1147418

Mr Peter Turville
Oxfordshire Welfare Rights
Barton Neighbourhood Centre
Underhill Circus, Headington
Oxford OX3 9LS

25 SEP 2018

RECEIVED 28 SEP 2018

Dear Mr Turville,

Thank you for your letter of 28 August about penalty charge notices. I have been asked to reply.

I appreciate your concerns.

Arrangements enabling those in receipt of Universal Credit, and meeting certain eligibility criteria, to claim help with health costs have been in place since April 2013, when Universal Credit was launched.

Where a patient meets the criteria in place for Universal Credit and is therefore entitled to claim entitlement for help with health costs, but there is no Universal Credit box available to tick on relevant forms, they can claim by ticking the 'income-based Jobseeker's Allowance' box on the relevant forms. These include NHS prescription forms and NHS optical services forms. Some NHS claim forms, for example HC5 refund claim forms, have been amended to include a specific tick box to enable Universal Credit recipients to claim entitlement.

All versions of dentistry claim forms were updated on 1 April 2016 to include a tick box for Universal Credit. Other forms will be updated to include a specific tick box for Universal Credit in due course.

Various sources of information for the public and relevant staff are provided on the arrangements for help with health costs, including how Universal Credit claimants should claim. Guidance has been included on the NHS Choices website, alongside

links to the Universal Credit webpages of the Government website. Information for practitioners has also been included in the Drug Tariff and practitioner bulletins.

The Department for Work and Pensions has issued general guidance so that Jobcentre Plus staff are aware of the temporary arrangements to tick the 'income-based Jobseeker's Allowance' box on the back of the NHS prescription form.

Pharmacists and dispensing staff should always ask for evidence of entitlement when a patient claims for the NHS to meet the cost of their prescriptions. Recipients of Universal Credit will be given an award notice that can be used to support their claim for entitlement. It is the patient's responsibility to consider whether they meet the relevant earnings thresholds.

Any claims for exemption from NHS charges or repayment of relevant health costs made by a person because they meet the qualifying criteria may be the subject of a validation check by the NHS BSA. This is to protect NHS resources from fraud and error. Those whose claim is selected for a validation check will be able to explain their position to the relevant authority and use their Universal Credit award notice to support their claim. This applies even if they tick one of the other boxes, for example, a Universal Credit claimant ticking the 'income-based Jobseeker's Allowance' box. Where it is not possible for the NHS BSA to confirm that a person was entitled to Universal Credit exemption, if a claimant can show that they did meet the criteria, the penalty charge will be cancelled.

Turning to your concerns about updating prescription forms to include Universal Credit, the Department does not yet have a confirmed date for the revised FP10 to be in circulation. The NHS BSA has undertaken research with patients and pharmacy staff to update and redesign the form. The final layout has yet to be agreed, and NHS Digital is carrying out work in order to make corresponding changes to the Electronic Prescription Service.

Issues relating to the Department for Work and Pensions are matters for that department, and you may therefore wish to raise your concerns with it directly. The contact details are:

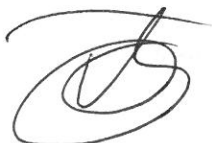
Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NA

Email: ministers@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Similarly, the number of penalty charges and refunds issues remains a matter for the NHS BSA.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tamsin Spargo', written in a cursive style.

Tamsin Spargo
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries