

EXECUTIVE NOTE
THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (CHARGES FOR DRUGS AND
APPLIANCES) (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2010
SSI 2010/1

The above instrument was made in exercise of the powers conferred on Scottish Ministers by sections 69(1) and (2), 105(7) and 108(1) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978. The instrument is subject to negative resolution procedure.

Policy Objectives

The Scottish Government believes that removing the financial barrier of prescription charges will ensure patients are not deterred from obtaining prescribed medication due to cost. This will be of benefit to everyone, particularly people who suffer from long term health conditions.

The purpose of this instrument is to continue the phased abolition of NHS prescription charges in accordance with the policy of the Scottish Government, which intends to abolish prescription charges completely by April 2011. The first stage of this policy was introduced by the National Health Service (Charges for Drugs and Appliances) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 (SSI 2008/27) and this instrument further reduces the per item prescription charge and the cost of prescription pre-payment certificates (PPCs). Charges for wigs and fabric supports are reduced in line with the prescription charge.

Per Item Prescription Charge

Last year, the Scottish Government reduced the per item prescription charge from £5.00 to £4.00. This instrument further reduces this from £4.00 to £3.00. The instrument also continues the current practice of charging the English rate where a prescription is presented on an English, Welsh or Northern Irish prescription form. The amendment made at 2(2)(b) and (d) ensures this reflects any change in that charge from 1st April 2010.

Prescription Pre-payment Certificates (PPCs)

This instrument further reduces the cost of PPCs so that the cost of a 4 month PPC is reduced from £13.00 to £10.00 and a 12 month PPC is reduced from £38.00 to £28.00. These cuts in particular will deliver further benefits to people who suffer from long term health conditions and require more than 3 prescription items over 4 months or more than 9 in a year.

Charges for Wigs and Fabric Supports

This instrument reduces the associated charges for all types of fabric supports and wigs, available on the NHS, including human hair wigs, where they are prescribed by a hospital physician to meet a patient's clinical need. Charges are reduced from £4.00 to £3.00 per item.

Financial Effects

The estimated cost of continuing to phase-out prescription charges in 2010/11 is £32m which will be allocated to NHS Boards.

