

Prescription charges in England

The Department of Health have issued Q&As on the changes to the prescriptions charging system in England:

- **How will patients with cancer be exempted?**
 - Cancer will be added to the list of conditions which are exempt from paying prescription charges
 - Once cancer has been added to the list, patients will be able to apply for an “exemption certificate” by asking their doctor for the relevant form
 - This certificate can then be shown to pharmacists as proof of exemption from paying charges
 - Certificate holders will not have to pay charges on *any* prescriptions
 - The certificate lasts for five years

- **How will people with long term conditions be exempted?**
 - The Government will hold a consultation and seek expert opinion on which long term conditions will be included on the list and how patients will be exempted

- **How will these changes be funded?**
 - The changes will be funded through savings in the drugs budget, which include using cheaper generic drugs

- **Is this the same as the schemes in Scotland and Wales?**
 - This is a different scheme to those in Scotland and Wales. Patients in England who are not exempt on grounds of age or income and who have a short term care need will still pay prescription charges.

- **Why start with cancer?**
 - The Government is aware of the concerns that cancer patients are struggling with costs – a recent Macmillan poll found 44% of cancer patients were cutting back on items like food and heating because of prescription costs.