

Q & A ON FREE MEDICATION FOR PATIENTS ON SUPERVISED COMMUNITY TREATMENT

Q. What does this change mean for patients on supervised community treatment (SCT)?

A. SCT patients will not have to pay a prescription charge for any medicines to treat mental disorder supplied to them by a patient group direction or by direct supply by a PCT or NHS trust. This does not apply to any medicines prescribed by a GP on a prescription form (FP10), where normal exemption arrangements will apply.

Q. What about medication that's nothing to do with the patient's mental disorder? Can they get that free too?

A. Not unless they are exempt from prescription charges for another reason, such as being age 60 or over (there are many other exemptions: further details are provided in leaflet HC11 and HC12. These leaflets can be ordered by phoning 0845 610 1112). This measure only applies to treatment for mental disorder (as defined in the Mental Health Act).

Q. Does the medication need to be specified in the patient's conditions of their supervised community treatment?

A. No. Any medicinal treatment for mental disorder is covered. It does not matter whether the treatment is mentioned in the conditions or not.

Q. Does this mean that SCT patients can't get their medicine from the community pharmacist?

A. No - SCT patients can still get medicines by taking a prescription form to the community pharmacy. But - unless they are exempt from charges for another reason, such as being age 60 or over or on one of the benefits which entitle a person to exemption, for example Income Support- they will have to pay the prescription charge. (There are many other exemptions: further details are provided in leaflet HC11 and HC12. These leaflets can be ordered by phoning 0845 610 1112.)

Q. Why can't SCT patients use the prescription form and get their medicines free that way?

A. We think that supply by a patient group direction or by direct supply by a PCT or NHS trust is the route most likely to be suitable for most SCT patients, and so this measure will meet their needs in the most appropriate way.

Q. But what if it turns out that patients' needs are not being adequately met by this measure?

A. As with any new policy, the Department will review the costs, benefits and effects of the policy in due course.