**NHS Lincolnshire ICB funding of prepayment prescription certificates for care leavers aged 18 to 25 years who are not entitled to free prescriptions under current exemptions.**

**Background.**

Research provides extensive evidence of poorer health outcomes for care experienced children and young people who are more likely to suffer from negative mental and physical health issues, in both the short and long-term, than their non-care experienced peers.

Access to appropriate healthcare and treatment can be compounded by the financial struggles experienced as young people leaving care face additional inequalities such as the financial constraints which may result as they move into independent living.

**Prescription Charges for Care Leavers.**

One extra burden for care leavers who are accessing apprenticeships or employment is the cost of prescription charges which rose to £9.65 per item on 1st April 2023. Many of these young people do not have access to funds from extended family, supporting them with daily living costs; the additional cost of a prescription may cause further financial hardship and may result in the prescription not being collected and health needs not being met.

The current list of those exempt from prescription charges does not include care leavers. Those exempt are listed below:

* Aged 16 – 18 in full time education.
* Who have a medical condition for which all prescriptions are free.
* On a low income.
* Who are (or are the partner of someone) in receipt of certain benefits including Income Support, Jobseeker’s Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit or Tax Credit.
* Who meet the NHS Low Income Scheme Requirements.
* Young people not in employment, education, or training.

**Implementation:**

Leaving Care Workers/ Leaving Care Service will play a key role is assisting care leavers to identify whether they are already entitled to free prescriptions and supporting in the completion of the relevant application form.

If the care leaver is exempt from prescription charges, because of a reason listed above, the free prescription should be obtained by applying for the appropriate exemption e.g., HC2 certificate ([Check if you're eligible for help | NHSBSA](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check-if-youre-eligible-help)). If the young person is eligible for free prescriptions under one of the national criteria, they may be exempt from other charges, such as dental treatment charges.

For those not entitled under the current list of exemptions, Leaving Care Workers can support care leavers to obtain a prepayment prescription certificate via NHS Lincolnshire ICB using the following process:

**Care Leaver Prescription Process for Lincolnshire.**

**I am a:**

* Lincolnshire Care Leaver
* Aged 18-25
* Not currently eligible for free prescriptions

**COMPLETE FORM**

**Support to complete the application form can be provided by the young person’s Leaving Care Worker or Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service.**

**The form can be found on within the safeguarding section of the Lincolnshire ICB website:**

[Safeguarding - Lincolnshire ICB](https://lincolnshire.icb.nhs.uk/about-us/safeguarding/)

**EMAIL COMPLETED FORM TO:**

licb.careleavers@nhs.net

Application processed

Certificate will be emailed directly to young person

Confirmation email sent from the ICB

Young person shows emailed certificate on collection of prescriptions.