



National Health Service in Scotland
Management Executive

St. Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Colleague

PRESCRIPTION CHARGE EXEMPTION FOR WOMEN
WHO HAVE GIVEN BIRTH TO A CHILD
REGISTRABLE AS STILL-BORN

Summary

1. The purpose of this letter is to advise Health Boards that the Still-birth (Definition) Act 1992 will reduce from 28 to 24 weeks the gestational age at which a baby is officially recognised as still-born. The Act, which will come into effect on 1 October 1992, amends section 56(1) of the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965 (interpretation) in the provisions which relate to the meaning of "still-born child". This will result in a change in the validity of prescription charge exemption certificates issued to women who give birth to a child registrable as still-born under the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965.

2. The NHS (Charges for Drugs and Appliances) (Scotland) Regulations 1989 provide for a pregnant woman and a woman who has given birth to a live child or a child registrable at still-born under the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965 to claim exemption from NHS prescription charges. Currently a child must be registered as still-born if the mother loses the child more than 28 weeks into the pregnancy. If she miscarries earlier than the 28th week, entitlement to free prescriptions is lost.

Action

3. The Still-birth (Definition) Act 1992 reduces from 28 weeks to 24 the minimum gestational age by which a stillbirth is defined. The Act will require, from 1 October 1992, the formal registration and certification of all stillbirths which occur after 24 weeks gestation. As far as prescription charge exemption is concerned, the effect of this will be that women who, after 1 October 1992, give birth to a stillborn child after 24 weeks gestation will continue to be entitled to free prescriptions until the end of the period of 12 months beginning with the expected date of confinement; miscarriage earlier than the 24th week will end entitlement.

4. It is appreciated that Health Boards are unlikely to be in a position to know whether or not

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Addresses:

For action:
General Managers,
Health Boards

For information:

General Manager,
Common Services Agency

General Manager
State Hospital

General Manager
Health Education Board for
Scotland

Chief Executives and
Chief Executive Designate,
NHS Trusts

To be copied to Unit
General Managers for
action as required

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Our Ref: PLN/1/6

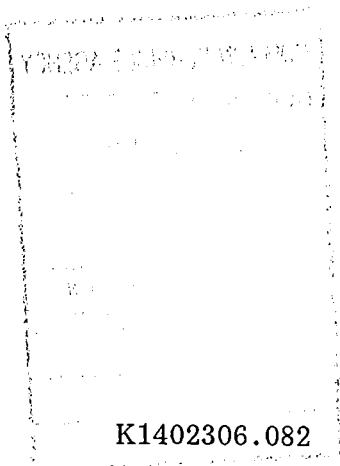
a woman has suffered a miscarriage and they are not required to pursue this issue. However, if a woman who has suffered a miscarriage approaches the Board asking whether or not she remains entitled to free prescriptions, she should be advised that her entitlement has come to an end and she should be asked to return her certificate.

5. This letter should be copied to Unit General Managers for action as required.

Yours sincerely



W SCOTT



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