Dear Colleague

NHS (Charges for Drugs and Appliances) (Scotland) Regulations 2008
NHS (Charges for Drugs and Appliances) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2008

1. Further to Circular PCS (P) 3 M (15) (2008) issued on 1 February 2008 this circular informs NHS Boards of the:

- Regulations coming into force;
- Public Information Campaign;
- Prescription Prepayment Certificates – Partial Refunds for Patients;
- Guidance for the Supply of Wigs and Fabric Supports.

Action by NHS Boards

2. NHS Boards are asked to draw the contents of this letter to the attention of:

- All staff involved in dealing with matters relating to prescribing, prescription charging and prescription pre-payment certificates; and
- All contractors on the pharmaceutical list to enable them to introduce the new charges from 1 April 2008.

DR JONATHAN PRYCE
Deputy Director

Addresses

For action
Chief Executives, NHS Boards
Chief Executive, NHS National Services Scotland

For information:
Chief Executive, NHS 24
Counter Fraud Services
Chief Executive, State Hospital Board for Scotland

Enquires to:
Shelagh Scott
Primary Care
1st Floor-East Rear
St Andrew's House
Regents Road
EDINBURGH
EH13DG
Tel: 0131-244-2597
Fax: 0131-244-2326
Email: Shelagh.scott@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

31 March 2008
THE REGULATIONS

Charges

The NHS (Charges for Drugs and Appliances) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 and the NHS (Charges for Drugs and Appliances) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2008 come into force on 1 April 2008.

The regulations allow for the cut in the per item prescription charge from £6.85 to £5.00 and the cost of prescription pre-payment certificates (PPCs). The cost of a 4 month PPC is reduced from £35.85 to £17.00 and a 12 month PPC is reduced from £98.70 to £48.00. Charges for wigs and fabric supports are reduced in line with the prescription charge.

The regulations also make provision for holders of PPCs which will remain valid for more than one month from 1 April 2008 to claim a partial refund of the amount they paid for their PPCs in 2007-08. Provision is also made for people resident in Scotland who are registered with a GP practice in England to benefit from the reduced Scottish charges on presentation of an entitlement card.

As a result of the fact that different charges will now be applicable in different parts of the UK, provision is also made in the regulations for persons presenting prescription forms issued in England, Wales or Northern Ireland to a Scottish pharmacy to pay the per item prescription charge which is applicable in the equivalent instrument in force in England. This mirrors the arrangements in place in Wales. This is subject to the arrangements referred to below in relation to entitlement cards. The existing arrangements for exemption from charges remain unchanged, apart from additional provision made in the instrument to recognise and apply valid exemption certificates issued in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Prescription Pre-payment Certificates – Partial Refunds

Provision has been made in the regulations to ensure that people who purchased PPCs in 2007-08 should benefit fully from the charge reductions effected by this instrument. Partial refunds will therefore be available in respect of PPCs which remain valid for one or more complete months beyond 1 April 2008. Holders of 4 month PPCs will be invited to claim a refund of £4.72 per qualifying month. 12 month PPCs will attract a refund of £4.23 per qualifying month. Claim forms for partial refunds arising from the phased abolition of charges are being issued to patients identified as eligible by National Services Scotland Practitioner Services Division. A small supply will also be made available to community pharmacies for issue to patients if requested. All refund claims made in respect of PPC purchases will be administered by NSS Practitioner Services Division.

In addition, the current regulatory provisions for PPC refund claims in specific circumstances will remain in force. This will enable full refunds to be made in appropriate cases, and will also ensure that qualifying claims can be considered in respect of PPCs which have outstanding validity of less than 1 complete month from 1 April 2008.

Charges for Wigs and Fabric Supports

The regulations reduce the charges payable for wigs and fabric supports to the level of the per item prescription charge and maintains the current eligibility criteria for exemption from
these charges. The effect of the revised provisions is to apply the same charge to all classes of prescribed fabric supports and wigs.

All types of fabric supports and wigs will be available on the NHS at the reduced charge of £5.00 per item. These items, including human hair wigs, will be supplied where they are prescribed by a hospital physician to meet a patient’s clinical need.

Guidance for the issuing of Wigs and Fabric Supports on the NHS is attached at Annex A.

Cross Border Issues - Entitlement Cards

The regulations make provision for the introduction of an entitlement card which confers on a qualifying patient the right to obtain prescribed drugs and appliances at the Scottish rate of prescription charge when their prescriptions are presented for dispensing at a Scottish pharmacy. The regulations also make provision for persons in possession of an entitlement card to obtain prescription pre-payment certificates at the reduced cost in Scotland. Entitlement cards will be issued to qualifying patients by NSS and will be valid for 5 years. In order for a patient to qualify for the Scottish rate of charge, the entitlement card will have to be produced at the point of dispensing.

Patients who are resident outside Scotland but who receive primary care medical services from a GP practice in Scotland will qualify to pay the Scottish prescription charge if they present their prescriptions at a Scottish pharmacy for dispensing. This is because they receive Scottish prescription forms from their doctors. The only other non-resident patients who will benefit from the Scottish prescription charge are those who register temporarily with a GP practice in Scotland, receive a Scottish prescription form and present it at a Scottish pharmacy for dispensing.

PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

A major public information campaign began on 22 March with panel posters being put up in Pharmacies across Scotland. The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing and the Minister for Public Health will officially launch the campaign on Tuesday 1 April in Govan.

The campaign website www.infoscotland.com/prescriptions went live on 22 March. The site provides information on PPCs and Entitlement Cards and includes a Q&A section.

Professional Information Packs have been distributed to community pharmacies, dispensing doctor surgeries, GP surgeries, Jobcentre Plus and Citizens Advice Scotland. The pack includes a detailed Q&A document, an A3 and A4 poster and a Quick Guide laminate information card.

A patient information leaflet has also been produced. 30 copies have been issued with each Professional Pack. The leaflets should be prominently displayed for ease of access by patients.

Should you require more copies please contact Banner Business Supplies at cust.serv.scotland@bbslimited.co.uk or fax 01506 448400.
PUBLIC INFORMATION ABOUT HEALTH CHARGES

HCS2 A Quick Guide to Help with Health Costs sets out the charges for prescriptions, wigs and fabric supports, hospital travel costs, dental treatment, sight tests and glasses or contact lenses. Supplies of the booklet will be distributed direct to Pharmacists and GPS with further copies available from Banner Business Supplies at cust.serv.scotland@bbslimited.co.uk or fax 01506 448400.

Please ensure the information booklets are made available for patients and stocks are kept replenished.

HCS1 Are you Entitled to Help with Health Costs? provides more on health costs and exemption entitlements. It also provides information on how a person can get help with health costs. The document is available on line only at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/NHS-Scotland/Health-Costs

Any questions arising from this circular should be directed to the relevant NHS Board.

Scottish Government
Health Directorates
31 March 2008
GUIDELINES FOR THE ISSUING OF WIGS AND FABRIC SUPPORTS

Summary

These guidelines have been produced following a review undertaken by a short-life working group established to research the position on the provision of NHS wigs and to make recommendations. The working group, the Supply of Wigs Investigation Group Scotland (SWIGS), made a number of recommendations. Some of these will require to be taken forward by a yet-to-be-established Implementation Group.

However, the review also highlighted a number of issues, particularly around records management, which require new procedures to be established as from 1 April 2008. While the aforementioned review was solely concerned with wigs, the records management guidelines are also required to be followed in relation to fabric supports. This guidance is issued against the background of the Scottish Government's proposals for the abolition of prescription charges generally.

Action

Chief Executives are requested to ensure that these guidelines are brought to the attention of all NHS staff involved in the provision of wigs and fabric supports and that the appropriate mechanisms are put in place.

Introduction

1. This guidance is designed to:-

• implement standardised procedures across Scotland;

• inform NHS Scotland staff of the new procedures for the recording of provision, and monitoring the issue, of NHS wigs and fabric supports (as specified in Schedule 1 of the National Health Service (Charges for Drugs and Appliances) (Scotland) Regulations 2008.

2. The guidance results from a review of the wigs service undertaken by a short-life working group, the Supply of Wigs Investigation Group Scotland (SWIGS), established to research the position on the provision of NHS wigs and to make recommendations.

3. SWIGS recommended to Scottish Ministers that new procedures are required on the provision of wigs, to be underpinned by national guidelines and standards, and that an implementation group be established and this work will be taken forward.

4. In the meantime, however, the NHS (Drugs and Appliances) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 come into force on 1 April 2008. This guidance is being issued together with these Regulations because the SWIGS investigations highlighted inconsistent records management which requires to be rectified now in order that officials are able to report to Ministers with accurate data on the provision and costs of wigs and fabric supports from 2008-09.
NHS Wigs: Categories of Wigs involved

5. The guidance relates to the provision of the basic stock modacrylic wig - except where a human hair wig is prescribed based on clinical need.

6. Also, whichever type of wig is prescribed, patients must be offered a choice of wig from that range (of modacrylic wigs) available through the NHS national contract. Good practice in provision should exclude limiting patient choice due to any form of “rationing” by boards on the basis of budgetary constraints.

7. However, it must be emphasised to all staff involved that where a modacrylic wig has been prescribed and a patient - for non-clinical reasons - wishes a human hair wig they will require to pay for it themselves.

Patients

8. Patients require NHS wigs most commonly as a result of having cancer or because they suffer from alopecia (although other patients e.g. burns victims, will also be involved). The Scottish Government proposes to abolish prescription charges and this policy is being taken forward via a series of phased reductions. The changes in charges for wigs and fabric supports, therefore, must be taken forward in parallel with the reduction of charges for other prescription items.

9. Cancer patients: Until the abolition of prescription charges, the position remains that such patients are not exempt from prescription charges on the basis of their medical condition.

10. Alopecia patients: Alopecia patients should continue to be provided with stock modacrylic wigs at the current prescription charge unless they meet other exemption criteria.

11. Unless patients are exempt on other grounds they should not be provided with free wigs. Patients should, therefore, pay the standard prescription charge unless they meet other exemption criteria.

12. The number of prescribed wigs that patients can receive per annum should be increased from two to a maximum of four.

Data Collection on the provision of NHS Wigs and Fabric Supports

13. The SWIGS investigations encountered significant problems in trying to obtain accurate Scotland-wide data because health boards employ different procedures and there is an evident lack of clearly defined accountability for records management. Officials are required to provide Ministers with reliable data on the number and cost of wigs supplied to patients, and the amount of prescription charge income collected.

14. Therefore, an appropriate member of staff in each health board area should be made responsible for the management of data collection and record keeping and identified to the Scottish Government. The establishment of this network will identify named contacts for all 14 health boards (who will be responsible for notifying the Scottish Government of any changes).
15. The above individuals’ contact details should be identified to:

W Reid
Blood and Rehabilitation Equipment Team
Room GER
St Andrew’s House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG
(billy.reid@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

16. The appropriate member of staff in each board will be responsible for ensuring that form W01 (attached) is completed for each patient and accurate data is maintained on:

- total number of patients by gender and age;
- medical conditions which trigger referral (e.g. cancer, alopecia or burns);
- number of wigs supplied to patients, including data on ‘multiple issues’ to individual patients where that is the case);
- numbers of each type of wig supplied to patients;
- cost of each wig to the NHS;
- amount of remuneration paid to each approved wigs supplier;
- number of patients exempt from prescription charges and therefore appliance charges;
- number of charges collected from patients; and
- amount of appliance income.

17. A clearly defined audit trail of all information must be maintained by every health board to enable the production of regular reports for the Scottish Government and/or National Procurement.

Fabric Supports

18. While the SWIGS review was solely concerned with wigs, the Scottish Government recognises that there requires to be equity of treatment for all patients. All NHS Boards, therefore, need to ensure that the same level/quality of data as indicated above regarding wigs is also gathered in respect of fabric supports on FS01.
The Scottish Government can be asked by Parliament questions on No of patients by gender, age and type of appliance provided. Local records should, therefore, reflect such data where possible as referred to in paragraphs 13, 14 and 17 of the guidelines.

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The Scottish Government can be asked by Parliament questions on No of patients by gender, age and type of wig provided. Local records should, therefore, reflect such data where possible as referred to in paragraphs 13, 14 and 17 of the guidelines.