

PROCEDURE FOR ISSUING AND REFUNDING FP57 FORMS (RECEIPT & REFUND OF PRESCRIPTION CHARGES) IN ENGLAND

Community Pharmacists to pay prescription charge refunds from 1 April 2005.

1. New arrangements for paying prescription charge refunds have been agreed with the PSNC and are being introduced in England. Pharmacists will pay prescription charge refunds from 1 April 2005. The Post Office will stop paying refunds from that date. This notice replaces all previous notices/guidance about FP57s.

2. This guidance applies to refunds of prescription charges in England only. Patients in Wales will be able to get refunds from Welsh Pharmacists from 1 April 2005. Patients enquiring about getting a refund paid in Scotland should call the following number
Scotland - 0131 275 6076

Or they can write to: Practitioner Services (Pharmacy Repayments), 1 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 9EB, Scotland

Pharmacy remuneration arrangements

3. We have agreed that an additional £200,000 will be available to community pharmacy for 2005-06 and represents payment for paying prescription charge refunds to patients (or their representatives). There will not be a fee per refund.

Revised form FP57

4. The FP57 receipt and claim form has been revised to describe the new procedure, i.e. the patient or representative takes the form to any pharmacy for a refund.

5. Supplies of revised FP57s will be purchased and distributed to dispensers by PCTs. Dispensers will not be able to purchase these items via other routes. The reference number of the new form is FP57 0405

6. Please issue the 0405 version from 1 April 2005. Old forms can be accepted. Therefore, if you do issue an old form the patient must be told to return the form to a pharmacy, not to the Post Office. As soon as you have supplies of the new form destroy any remaining FP57 0403 forms in a secure manner (e.g. by shredding, or in accordance with local policy for secure waste).

7. FP57s will be serially numbered for fraud prevention and audit purposes

Security of forms FP57

8. Forms FP57 are secure items and should not be left in locations where they may be accessed by the public. They should be locked away when not required. Only authorised staff may process prescription refunds. If a pad or a form disappears, or cannot be accounted for, report this urgently to the PCT. Pharmacists should be alert to the possibility of misuse of the forms.

Dispensing Information - When to issue form FP57

9. Only issue an FP57 when the patient (or representative) requests this (but see paragraph 12 below) or is in genuine doubt about whether they might be exempt from prescription charges, or they have applied (or are thinking about applying) for a prescription charge exemption certificate or prepayment certificate.

10. When a patient (or representative) states they do not have to pay prescription charges because they are in an exempted group or hold a pre-payment certificate, they are not required to pay a charge simply because they do not have any evidence of entitlement. If they are prepared to sign to say they are exempt, they should complete and sign the declaration on the reverse of the prescription form. The "evidence not seen" box should be crossed, as per normal Point of Dispensing check procedures.

11. Only issue an FP57 at the time the prescription charge is paid. Later requests may be an attempt to get a second FP57 to obtain a double refund fraudulently. If the patient or their representative is persistent in their request and they have grounds why they do not have an FP57, they should be advised to write to Patient Services at the Prescription Pricing Authority, Sandyford House, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1DB or ring 0845 850 1166, to explain why they were unable to obtain an FP57. The PPA will review the claim and will either send a payment directly to the patient or advise the patient why they do not qualify.

12. If a receipt is required by a carer or representative, for example to show that the charge was paid, a till receipt may be sufficient proof. Only if a refund may be required should the patient be issued with an FP57.

Issuing FP57s

13. Part A must be fully completed by the dispenser or an authorised member of staff. There must be no alterations to the amounts or the quantities in Part A. If a mistake is made, then start again with a new form and cross through the discarded form in such a way that it cannot be used and write, "CANCELLED" diagonally across it. The dispenser can initial any other alterations elsewhere on the form. Any forms which have been discarded due to alterations or mistakes in Part A should be kept for audit purposes.

14. The dispenser's stamp and date of payment must be on the form with the patient's name and address, the rate of prescription charge paid per item, the number of charges paid and the total paid.

Pharmacy Information - Processing FP57 forms for refunds

15. Patients should preferably return the FP57 form to the community pharmacy that issued it. However, if this is not possible they may take the form to the most convenient pharmacy (normally in the country where the charge was paid.)

16. Community pharmacists should accept the claim even if the FP57 was issued by a hospital or other NHS organisation. If a dispensing doctor or appliance contractor has taken a payment and the patient requires a refund the dispensing doctor or appliance contractor must provide the patient with an FP57. The patient should go to a community pharmacy to obtain the refund.

17. Pharmacists may make refunds for FP57s issued in Scotland and Wales. The paid FP57 form will be sent to the Prescription Pricing Authority in the normal way.

18. When a patient presents an FP57 form for payment, the pharmacist (or any member of staff who would normally collect a prescription charge) should check the following:

- serial number on the form to ensure it is in the same format as the forms held by that pharmacy;
- that there are no alterations to the amounts or quantities in Part A and the form appears genuine, eg there is no white border indicating that it is a “home produced” copy,

If the form is not in order the pharmacist should phone the CFSMS fraud line number 08702 400100.

If the form is in order, take the following steps:

- check that the claim is being made within three months of the date the charge was paid, or the patient has an authorised form (LIS04(P)) from Patient Services.
- Request evidence of entitlement to exemption or sight of form LIS04(P) authorising payment
- Check that the evidence relates to the patient
- Check that the evidence covers the date the charge was paid
- Note on FP57 what was produced, e.g. tax credit exemption certificate
- Note on FP57 the reference number on the exemption document (where applicable) eg 1234365
- Note on the FP57 the LIS04(P) form reference number and date
- The person claiming the refund must print their name and address (i.e. the representative's details where appropriate.)
- Pay the amount shown in Part A of the FP57
- Obtain signature of patient, or representative, and date for the cash
- Ensure that you, or the member of staff authorised to make refunds sign and print their name on the FP57 form

Time Limit for making claims

19. A refund must be claimed within 3 months of the date on which the prescription charge was paid (e.g. if charge is paid 1 January, the refund must be claimed by 31 March). If more than 3 months have elapsed between the time the charge was paid and the FP57 is presented for payment, the refund may not be paid unless the patient has a form LIS04(P).

20. In the event of a late claim, patients will need to send the FP57 form to Patient Services, Prescription Pricing Authority, Sandyford House, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1DB and explain why they did not claim the refund within the 3 month time limit. Patient Services will review the claim and either authorise a refund by sending form LIS04(P) or advise the patient why they do not qualify.

Old style FP57s

21. You may be presented with the old FP57 form which are orange/black and have the reference number FP57 0403 in the top left-hand corner. If a patient does produce an old style form, the refund may be paid as long as the form is presented within three months of the charge being paid, or if the patient has an authorised form LIS04(P)

Claiming Payment from the PPA

22. Send all paid FP57s to the PPA each month with FP10s for processing. The FP34C Submission Document (previously referred to as the invoice) has been revised to show the number of FP57 claims refunded and the total value of the refunds made.

23. The PPA will adjust the schedule of payments to reflect the total amount paid in respect of refunds made to patients. The refunds made in April 2005 will be submitted with the April 2005 prescription batch by 5th May 2005 and the amount repaid on 1 July 2005.