

# Help with health costs

**I**f you have Parkinson's, you might have some concerns about how you'll manage financially. Although most of your healthcare will be covered by the NHS (if you live in England, Wales or Scotland) or Health and Social Care (if you live in Northern Ireland), you may be worried about paying for any extra medical costs.

**But there is some financial support available, so it's important that you're aware of what benefits and schemes you're entitled to. This information explains more about NHS costs and any help you may get to pay for them.**

## Can I get help with health costs?

Most health treatment is free, but some things may have to be paid for. These include prescriptions, dental treatment, sight tests, glasses, wigs and fabric supports. What you have to pay for varies depending on whether you live in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. For example:

- In Scotland, dental check-ups and sight tests are free.
- In Wales, dental check-ups are free for people aged under 25 or over 60.
- Prescriptions are free in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but they have to be paid for in England, where each item on the prescription currently costs £8.80.
- In England, people under 16 don't have to pay for prescriptions or sight tests and people under 18 don't have to pay for dental treatment. People aged 60 or over qualify for free NHS eyesight tests and don't have to pay for prescriptions.

People with certain medical conditions might not have to pay some charges. For example, people with insulin-dependent diabetes get free prescriptions and people with glaucoma, or considered to be at risk of glaucoma, get free eye tests, wherever they live in the UK.

This information sheet gives general information about getting help with health costs depending on your personal circumstances. If you're not sure whether you can get any of your costs paid for, call the NHS Help with Health Costs helpline on **0300 330 1343**.

## Help if you are on means-tested benefits

You will get free prescriptions, dental treatment, sight tests, wigs and fabric supports if you (or your partner, if you have one) get:

- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, **or**
- Universal Credit (if you do not have earnings or combined earnings of more than £435 a month, or £935 a month if your award includes a child amount or you, or your partner, have a limited capability for work)

You will also get vouchers towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses. If the cost of your glasses or contact lenses is more than your voucher value, you will need to pay the difference.

## Contributory ESA and contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance

You aren't automatically entitled to help with your health costs if you get contributory Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance. But you might get help if you are on the Low Income Scheme (see below for more details).

## Pension Credit

If you (or your partner, if you have one) get the Pension Credit 'Guarantee Credit', with or without Savings Credit, you can get the same help with health costs as people who get the means-tested benefits listed above.

If you only get the Pension Credit 'Savings Credit', you can't automatically get help, but you might get help under the Low Income Scheme (see below).

## Tax credits

Some people who get Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit may be able to get free prescriptions, depending on their income.

If you qualify, you will be sent a tax credit exemption certificate by the NHS Business Services Authority once your award has been confirmed by HM Revenue and Customs. Your exemption certificate is valid until the expiry date stated on the certificate, regardless of any changes to your tax credit entitlement.

## Help if you can't go out

If you have an ongoing physical disability that prevents you from leaving home without help from someone else, you'll get free prescriptions. You can apply for an exemption form FP92A, which you can get from your doctor, pharmacist or hospital.

## The NHS Low Income Scheme

This scheme gives income-related help with health costs for people who aren't automatically exempt from health service charges, but who are on a low income. The scheme is administered by the NHS Business Services Authority.

Under this scheme, you can qualify for full or partial help with all NHS charges and for vouchers for glasses and contact lenses. Under the Low Income Scheme, the help you are entitled to depends on your income and circumstances. Any capital you have (your assets such as savings and property, minus your debt) must be below £16,000, or £23,250 (£24,000 in Wales) if you live permanently in a care home.

The NHS Business Services Authority will send you an HC2 certificate (for full help) or an HC3 certificate (for partial help) that determines the amount you have to contribute towards the charges. Your partner and any children you are responsible for will also qualify once you qualify on low-income grounds.

## How can I get help?

To apply for help under the Low Income Scheme, you need to fill in an HC1 application form. Ring the NHS Business Services Authority on **0300 123 0849** to get a form with a pre-paid return envelope or go to [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme). Hospitals, GPs, dentists, opticians and advice agencies may also have forms available.

If you think you might be able to get help under the Low Income Scheme, you should apply now, as you can't always predict what you might have to pay for in the future.

## Help with prescription costs

In England, each item you are prescribed will cost £8.80. If you need prescription items on a regular basis and you do not qualify for free prescriptions, you can sometimes save money with a Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC):

- A three-month PPC costs £29.10 and covers all items you get during that period, so if you need four or more prescriptions in that time, you'll save money with a PPC.
- A 12-month PPC costs £104, so if you need 13 or more prescriptions in a year, it will save you money.

To get a Prescription Prepayment Certificate, you can do one of the following:

- visit [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-help-health-costs](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-help-health-costs)
- use form FP95, available from your local pharmacy
- call the NHS Business Services Authority on **0300 330 1341**

## Help with travel costs

The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme covers any journeys you might make to an NHS hospital or similar place for health service treatment. If you need to have someone with you, their travel expenses might also be paid for. If you're not able to use public transport because of your disability, you can claim the cost of taxi fares or the cost of car fuel (you must get the hospital to agree to this beforehand).

If you're entitled under this scheme, the hospital can also refund the costs of journeys already made using claim form HC5. There should be an office at the hospital where you can do this.

## Do I qualify?

You can get full help under this scheme if you get any of the means-tested benefits listed on page 2, or if you have an HC2 certificate under the Low Income Scheme. You are entitled to partial help if you have an HC3 certificate under the Low Income Scheme.

## More information and support

### Parkinson's nurses

Parkinson's nurses provide expert advice and support to people with Parkinson's and those who care for them. They can also make contact with other health and social care professionals to make sure your needs are met.

The role of the Parkinson's nurse varies. Each will offer different services, aiming to meet local needs. Some nurses are based in the community, whereas others are based in hospital settings.

Many Parkinson's nurses are independent prescribers. This means they can prescribe and make adjustments to medication, so someone with Parkinson's doesn't always need to see their specialist for changes to or queries about their Parkinson's drugs.

Parkinson's nurses may not be available in every area, but your GP or specialist can give you more details on local services.

You can find out more at [parkinsons.org.uk/nurses](https://parkinsons.org.uk/nurses)

### Information and support from Parkinson's UK

You can call our free confidential helpline for general support and information. Call **0808 800 0303** (calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks) or email [hello@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:hello@parkinsons.org.uk).

We run a peer support service if you'd like to talk on the phone with someone affected by Parkinson's who has faced similar issues to you. The service is free and confidential – ring the helpline to talk to someone about being matched with a volunteer.

Our helpline can also put you in touch with one of our Parkinson's local advisers, who give one-to-one information and support to anyone affected by Parkinson's. They can also provide links to local groups and services.

We also have a self-management programme for people with Parkinson's, partners and carers. It is an opportunity to reflect on life with the condition, learn about self-management and think about the future. To find out if there is a group near you, visit [parkinsons.org.uk/selfmanagement](https://parkinsons.org.uk/selfmanagement)

Our website [parkinsons.org.uk](https://parkinsons.org.uk) has a lot of information about Parkinson's and everyday life with the condition. You can also find details of your local support team and your nearest local group meeting at [parkinsons.org.uk/localtoyou](https://parkinsons.org.uk/localtoyou)

Visit [parkinsons.org.uk/forum](https://parkinsons.org.uk/forum) to chat to other people with similar experiences on our online discussion forum.

## Thank you

Thank you to Disability Rights UK for updating this information sheet. Disability Rights UK also have a wide range of online factsheets relating to disability-related issues including Access to Work, education, the Blue Badge scheme, independent living and disabled facilities grants.

Visit their website: [www.disabilityrightsuk.org](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

## Can you help?

At Parkinson's UK, we are totally dependent on donations from individuals and organisations to fund the work that we do. There are many ways that you can help us to support people with Parkinson's.

If you would like to get involved, please contact our Supporter Services team on **0800 138 6593** or visit our website at [parkinsons.org.uk/donate](http://parkinsons.org.uk/donate). Thank you.

## Our information

All of our most up-to-date information is available at [parkinsons.org.uk/information-support](http://parkinsons.org.uk/information-support). If you'd prefer to read one of our printed leaflets or booklets, find out how to place an order at [parkinsons.org.uk/ordering-resources](http://parkinsons.org.uk/ordering-resources) or by calling **0300 123 3689**.

We make every effort to ensure that our services provide current, unbiased and accurate information. We hope that this will add to any professional advice you receive and help you to make any decisions you may face. Please do continue to talk to your health and social care team if you are worried about any aspect of living with Parkinson's.

If you'd like to find out more about how we put our information together, including references and the sources of evidence we use, please contact us at [publications@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:publications@parkinsons.org.uk)

## Help with health costs (WB09/2018)

Do you have any feedback about this information? Your comments will help us ensure our resources are as useful and easy to understand as possible. Please return to [Information Content team, Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ](#), or email [publications@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:publications@parkinsons.org.uk). Thank you!

### 1. Please choose the option that best fits you.

- I have Parkinson's and was diagnosed in   I care for someone with Parkinson's  
 I have a friend or family member with Parkinson's  I'm a professional working with people with Parkinson's  
 Other (please specify)
- 

### 2. Where did you get this information from?

- GP  Specialist  Parkinson's nurse  Parkinson's UK local group  Parkinson's UK local adviser  
 Ordered directly from us  Call to the helpline  
 Other (please specify)
- 

### 3. Has it answered all your questions?

- Yes, completely  Yes, mostly  Not sure  Partly  Not at all

### 4. How easy was it to understand?

- Very easy  Easy  Not sure  Quite difficult  Very difficult

### 5. Has it helped you manage your condition better, or make choices that have improved your life in some way?

- It helped a lot  It helped a little  No change  It didn't help  It made things worse

### 6. What is your ethnic background?\*

- Asian or Asian British  Black or Black British  Chinese  Mixed  White British  White other  
 Other (please specify)
- 

\*We ask about your ethnicity to ensure our information is reaching a broad range of people. However, this question is optional.

## Want to hear more from us?

- I would like a response to my feedback  I would like to be a member of Parkinson's UK  
 I'm interested in joining the Information review group, to offer feedback on Parkinson's UK information

**If you've answered yes to any of these options, please complete your details below.**

Name

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Address

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Email

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Telephone

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**How would you prefer us to contact you?**  Email  Post  Phone

We will not pass on your details to any other organisation or third party. To find out more, read our privacy policy at [parkinsons.org.uk/termsandconditions](http://parkinsons.org.uk/termsandconditions)

Every hour, two people in the UK are told they have Parkinson's – a brain condition that turns lives upside down, leaving a future full of uncertainty.

Parkinson's UK is here to make sure people have whatever they need to take back control – from information to inspiration.

We want everyone to get the best health and social care. So we bring professionals together to drive improvements that enable people to live life to the full.

Ultimately, we want to end Parkinson's. That's why we inspire and support the international research community to develop life-changing treatments, faster. And we won't stop until we find a cure.

**Together we can bring forward the day when no one fears Parkinson's.**

## **Parkinson's UK**

Free confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**

Monday to Friday 9am–7pm, Saturday 10am–2pm. Interpreting available.

NGT Relay **18001 0808 800 0303** (for use with smart phones, tablets, PCs and other devices).

For more information see [www.ngts.org.uk](http://www.ngts.org.uk)

[hello@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:hello@parkinsons.org.uk)

[parkinsons.org.uk](http://parkinsons.org.uk)

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Please check our website for the most up-to-date versions of all our information.

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