

Commissioning Partnership Board Report

Decision Maker: Commissioning Partnership Board

Date of Decision: 30/05/19

Subject: Prescription Charges for Oldham's Care Leavers

Report Author: Claire Smith, Executive Nurse

Reason for the decision:

Summary:

Young people from the Children in Care Council presented a motion to Oldham Council to look at prescription charge exemptions for care leavers. An initial proposal was received at MET and JLT regarding the potential exemption of prescription charges for care leavers in Oldham who are in employment or apprenticeships. Following this report it was agreed that Oldham Cares would undertake an appraisal of the potential options to deliver such an exemption for this cohort of young people. This led to the option of a Prescription Prepayment Certificate being reviewed in more detail as the recommended approach of how to take this forward.

This report outlines the costs of providing such support and some practical considerations about the system that will need to be established to implement and maintain the support.

What are the alternative option(s) to *Options are as follows:*

be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):

1. To continue as is in line with national with exemptions
2. annual prescription certificate for all in apprenticeship or employment
3. annual prescription certificate for 18-21 in apprenticeship or employment
4. Individual payments for prescriptions when required
5. 50% of Individual Payments for Prescriptions

Recommendation(s):

The preferred option is option 2 – an annual prescription exemption certificate for all in apprenticeship or employment

Implications:

*What are the **financial** implications?*

The annual cost for this is £104 per person.
For all care leavers in Oldham aged 18-25 (41 young people) who are on apprenticeships or in employment, to purchase a pre-payment certificate, this would cost **£ 4,264.**

*What are the **procurement** implications?*

Not applicable

*What are the **legal** implications?*

Not applicable

*What are the **Human Resources** implications?*

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason)

EQIA is being carried out however there is no identified adverse impact.

*What are the **property** implications*

Not applicable

Risks:

There is a risk that publicity around this decision may however cause members of these two groups to question their eligibility for exemption. An appeals process is being drawn up to mitigate these issues.

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution/CCG's Standing Orders?

Awaiting confirmation

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any

Yes

expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the S.75 budget?

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council/CCG? No

Reason(s) for exemption from publication:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Council

Reason why this Is a Key Decision

- (2) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.

There are no background papers for this report

Report Author Sign-off:	
Claire Smith	
Date: 20/05/19	

Please list any appendices:-

Appendix number or letter	Description

Executive Summary

Young people from the Children in Care Council presented a motion to Oldham Council to look at prescription charge exemptions for care leavers. Following a report to MET and JLT in January 2019 it was agreed that Oldham CCG would undertake an appraisal of the potential options to deliver prescription charge exemptions for young people leaving care in employment or apprenticeships. The initial paper explored a number of different options and can be found in full below.



JLT briefing re
prescription charges f

From the detail within the paper and subsequent discussion at these executive level forums, it was decided that the most practical solution to supporting this vulnerable group of young around prescription charges was to pursue the route of prepayment prescription certificates.

This report outlines the costs of providing such support and some practical considerations about the system that will need to be established to implement and maintain the support

Background

In October 2018 Oldham's Children in Care Council presented a motion to Oldham's full council in relation to prescription charges for care leavers. On the 1st April 2018 prescription charges rose to £8.80 per item. For young people aged 16-18 who are in full time education or receiving benefits under the age of 20, they are entitled to free prescriptions. Young people may also be exempt if they are on low income. Young people who are in full time employment or apprenticeship earning £15,276 or more are not exempt from charges.

Care Leavers have additional inequality issues over and above their peers of the same age including financial constraints as they move into independent living. Furthermore it is reported that children looked after and Care Leavers were between 4-5 times more likely to self-harm in adulthood. Care Leavers are 4 times more likely to have a mental health issue and significantly more likely to have physical health problems.

Following the motion to the council a paper was prepared by Cath Millington, the Corporate Parenting Lead, which presented a number of options. From this, a further options appraisal has been undertaken to consider the practicalities of the arrangements, financial impact and potential legal implications. The outcome of this work has been a recommendation to pursue the option of buying a Prescription Prepayment Certificate for all Care Leavers in apprenticeship or employment. This paper outlines the costs of that option and some practical considerations for implementation.

Proposals

When considering the cost of prescriptions, it is also important to recognise this cost against the cost of healthcare when appropriate medication is not obtainable when needed.

Currently in Oldham we have 240 care leavers aged 18-25:

88 are in full time education and therefore exempt from prescription charges

106 are not in employment, education or training and therefore would be exempt

5 young people's destination is unknown

41 are in apprenticeships or employment and are not exempt from prescription charges

(Figures December 2018)

The preferred option for support was to purchase an annual prescription certificate for all in apprenticeship or employment. **The annual cost for this is £104 per person.** For all care leavers in Oldham aged 18-25 (41 young people) who are on apprenticeships or in employment, to purchase a pre-payment certificate, this would cost **£ 4,264.**

The rationale for pursuing this option is that research shows us that the general population is likely to need 20 prescription items per year on average. Even if we increase this estimate by 50% for Care Leavers, this would equate to 30 prescription items per year amounting to a cost of **£264** each per annum. For Oldham's population this could potentially be **£10,824** for the 41 care leavers who would need to pay for their prescriptions. With this method all prescribed items are covered by the Prescription Prepayment Certificate.

If a young person has:

2 items each month – this would save around £105 per annum from total individual item cost

3 items per month – this would save £210 per annum

4 items per month – this would save £315 per annum

It is important to recognise that this is a blanket decision for this cohort and would not take into account those who may get additional support with prescriptions due to their low income and a proportion of this cohort may not need a prescription.

Practical considerations

1. Payment

The pre-payment certificates are purchased either on-line or by telephone. The logistics of payment process are currently being finalised with colleagues from both CCG and Council Finance teams. Given the requirement to enter bank details on the online form, the solution we are recommending is a mock up form being completed by the young person with support from their key worker if required. This would then be entered into the system by the CCG finance team along with the bank details and the certificate sent via email back to the young person. This will be worked through by the team along with IG support to ensure a safe, effective process is followed.

The process for obtaining an exemption certificate will be set out in the Health section on the Care Leavers Passport. There would also need to be a record of the prescription payment certificate expiry dates so that the Care Leaver could be prompted to return for a renewal meeting. This would need monitoring to prevent lapses in cover and unnecessary costs.

2. Cohort definition

The cohort of young people that is being described is not a static group therefore consideration must be given to the fact that this number will change year on year. Supporting each individual young person to obtain a certificate at time of need will be more effective than a blanket purchase, however it is essential that there is a system in place with local authority colleagues to support the application process and reduce risk of inappropriate application. The key worker will need to be appropriately informed and

supported to ensure exemption is appropriately applied. This will be fully explained within the Care Leavers Passport and information will be available to support key workers.

Consideration must be given to Oldham Care Leavers who live outside of the area. Oldham CCG is not the responsible commissioner for these individuals. Also, those care leavers originating from out of borough who are now living in Oldham following being placed in care here must also be considered. At present we do not have a way of tracking this particular element of the cohort as they continue with social care support from their originating authority. There is a risk that publicity around this decision may however cause members of these two groups to question their eligibility for exemption. An appeals process is being drawn up to mitigate these issues.

3. Value for money

It is impossible to predict the actual number of prescriptions that each individual care leaver may require. This means that a number of the identified cohort will go through the process to purchase a certificate but the number of prescriptions filled will not equate to the annual payment made. When taken as a whole, this may balance over time but in agreeing to the proposal members must be clear that these are changing numbers over time.

Recommendation

1. That the Commissioning Partnership Board approves the system outlined above for the earliest possible implementation, recognising the practical considerations outlined above.