

GOVERNMENT OF ST HELENA



Medical Fees and Prescriptions Exemption Policy

January 2019

This policy sets out St Helena Government's intention in relation to exempting persons or households from paying medical fees and prescriptions and sets out the application process and other administrative processes.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

DOCUMENT TITLE	Medical Fees and Prescriptions Exemption Policy
VERSION NUMBER	(DRAFT) 1.0
AUTHOR	

DATE APPROVED	
APPROVED BY	The Public Health Committee
EFFECTIVE DATE	1 April 2019
DOCUMENT STATUS	Drafting stage

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	31 March 2020
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Director of Health
SUPERSEDED VERSION	Policy for the Exemption from Payment of Medical Fees - Agreed by Health and Social Welfare Committee January 2012.

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy is known as the Medical Fees and Prescriptions Exemption Policy and sets out the criteria and process to exempt eligible persons or households from payment of medical and prescription fees.

2. Definitions

“Adjudication Officer” means the Officer appointed under section 3 of the Social Security Ordinance, 2011.

“Basic Island Pension” means the benefits awarded under section 4 of the Social Security Ordinance, 2011.

“Better Life Allowance” means the allowance paid to individuals under the Better Life Allowance Policy, 2017.

“Household” means the group of persons defined by the Social Security Ordinance, 2011 to determine eligibility for Income Related Benefits.

“Income Related Benefit” means the benefit awarded under section 8 of the Social Security Ordinance, 2011.

“Low Income Households” means Households whose income determined in accordance with the same rules relating to the Income Related Benefit in the Social Security Regulations, is less than ten percent above the poverty line.

“Medical Fees” means fees or charges made by the Health Directorate for the provision of health care services publicised in the Fees and Charges Public Notice issued by the Health Directorate under the categories Medical and Dental and including the Other Fees: Body Chiller, Eye Screening and Physio Aids.

“Occupational Therapy Allowance” means the allowance paid to individuals under the Occupational Therapy Allowance Policy.

“Prescription Fees” means the fees charged by the Pharmacy for prescribing medicines, drugs or medical materials.

“Unemployment Allowance” means the allowance paid to individuals under the Unemployment Allowance Policy 2011.

“Vulnerable Groups” means individuals in receipt of the Basic Island Pension, Better Life Allowance and Occupational Therapy Allowance; households in receipt of the Income Related Benefit, low income households and individuals over the age of sixty five years whose income determined under regulation 7(3)(a) of the Social Security Regulations, is less than 10% above the poverty line, and persons in full time education aged twenty one years or under,

3. Purpose

3.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that vulnerable groups within the community have access to affordable health care and are not discouraged from accessing health care services due to their financial circumstances.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. The Public Health Committee is responsible for approving this Policy and any subsequent amendments or withdrawal of this Policy.

4.2. The Adjudication Officers at the Social Security Office of Corporate Services are responsible for undertaking the assessment of applications made under this Policy, in accordance with the provisions of this Policy. The Social Security Office is responsible for informing the Accounts Section of the Health Directorate on a weekly basis of persons or households eligible for an exemption from medical and prescription fees under this Policy and for persons or households no longer exempted.

4.3. The Health Directorate is responsible for the periodic review of the implementation of the policy and to ensure that the aims of the Policy are being met. The Health Directorate will be responsible for maintaining a comprehensive list of eligible households or persons under this Policy and for making arrangements for the relevant directorate officers to be informed of the list and for applying the exemptions in accordance with the list.

5. Entitlement Criteria

5.1. Households in Receipt of Income Related Benefits

5.1.1. All members of a household in receipt of Income Related Benefits (IRB) will be exempt from the payment for all medical and prescription fees except for those households that receive IRB by virtue of the rules relating to Transitional protection, in which case the provisions of section 5.9 will apply.

5.2. Individuals in Receipt of Basic Island Pensions

5.2.1. All persons in receipt of the Basic Island Pension (BIP) will be exempt from the payment for **prescription fees**.

5.2.2. Exemption from the payment for medical fees will be means tested in accordance with the same rules relating to IRB in the Social Security Regulations on how income and assets are treated. A person in receipt of BIP whose individual income level is less than the poverty line determined under regulation 7(3) (a) of the Social Security Regulations plus 10% will be entitled to an exemption from the payment for **medical fees**.

5.3. Individuals in Receipt of the Better Life Allowance

5.3.1. Individuals in receipt of the Better Life Allowance (BLA) are not automatically exempted from the payment for **prescription** and **medical fees**. BLA recipients must apply for an exemption from the payment of fees through the application process unless they are in receipt of IRB or BIP in which case the provisions under sections 5.1 or 5.2 respectively will apply.

5.3.2. Exemption from the payment of medical or prescription fees will be means tested in accordance with the same rules relating to IRB in the Social Security Regulations on how income and assets are treated. An individual in receipt of BLA whose income level, irrespective of the other income of the household, is less than the amount determined under regulation 7(3) (a) of the Social Security Regulations plus 10%, will be entitled to an exemption from the payment for **medical and prescription fees**.

5.4. Individuals in Receipt of the Occupational Therapy Allowance

5.4.1. Individuals in receipt of the Occupational Therapy Allowance (OT) will not automatically be exempted from the payment for **prescription** and **medical fees**. OT recipients must apply for an exemption from the payment of fees through the application process unless they are in receipt of IRB or BIP in which case the provisions under sections 5.1 or 5.2 respectively will apply.

5.4.2. Exemption from the payment for medical or prescription fees will be means tested in accordance with the same rules relating to IRB in the Social Security Regulations on how income and assets are treated. A person in receipt of OT whose individual income level, irrespective of the other income of the household, is less than the amount determined under regulation 7(3) (a) of the Social Security Regulations plus 10% will be entitled to an exemption from the payment for **medical and prescription fees**.

5.5. Individuals in Receipt of the Unemployment Allowance

5.5.1. Individuals in receipt of the Unemployment Allowance (UA) will not automatically be exempted from the payment for **prescription** and **medical fees**. UA recipients must apply for an exemption from the payment of fees through the application process unless they are in receipt of IRB or BIP in which case the provisions under sections 5.1 or 5.2 respectively will apply.

5.5.2. Exemption from the payment for medical or prescription fees will be means tested in accordance with the same rules relating to IRB in the

Social Security Regulations on how income and assets are treated. A person in receipt of UA whose individual income level, irrespective of the other income of the household, is less than the amount determined under regulation 7(3) (a) of the Social Security Regulations plus 10% will be entitled to an exemption from the payment for **medical and prescription fees**.

5.6. Individuals Over the Age of Sixty Five Years

5.6.1. Individuals over the age of sixty five years will be exempt from the payment for **prescription fees**.. Exemption must be applied for through the application process unless individuals are in receipt of IRB or BIP in which case the provisions under sections 5.1 or 5.2 respectively will apply.

5.6.2. Exemption from the payment for medical fees will be means tested in accordance with the same rules relating to IRB in the Social Security Regulations on how income and assets are treated. A person in receipt of BIP whose individual income level is less than the poverty line determined under regulation 7(3) (a) of the Social Security Regulations plus 10% will be entitled to an exemption from the payment for **medical fees**.

5.7. Low Income Households

5.7.1. Members of low income households can apply for an exemption from the payment of fees through the application process.

5.7.2. Exemption from the payment for medical or prescription fees will be means tested in accordance with the same rules relating to IRB in the Social Security Regulations on how income and assets are treated. A person whose individual income level, irrespective of the other income of the household, is less than the amount determined under regulation 7(3) (a) of the Social Security Regulations plus 10% will be entitled to an exemption from the payment for **medical and prescription fees**.

5.8. Persons in Full Time Education aged Twenty One Years or Under

5.8.1. All young people in full time education will be exempt from the payment for all medical and prescription fees.

5.9. Transitional Protection

5.9.1. For Households that receive IRB by virtue of the rules relating to Transitional protection, only those household members who were in receipt of IRB prior to 1 April 2011 will be entitled to exemption from payment for **medical and prescription fees**.

5.10. Summary Entitlement Criteria

5.10.1. Eligibility for exemption under this policy is summarised in the table below for each category within the vulnerable group.

Categories	Prescription Fees	Medical Fees
All members of a Household in receipt of Income Related Benefit (except for households that are transitionally protected)	Automatically Exempt	Automatically Exempt
Individuals in receipt of the Basic Island Pension	Automatically Exempt	Must apply
Individuals in receipt of the Better Life Allowance	Must apply	Must apply
Individuals in receipt of the Occupational Therapy Allowance	Must apply	Must apply
Individuals in receipt of the Unemployment Allowance	Must apply	Must apply
Individuals over the Age of Sixty Five Years	Automatically Exempt	Must apply
Low Income Households	Must apply	Must apply
<u>Persons in Full Time Education aged Twenty One Years or under</u>	Automatically Exempt	Automatically Exempt
Transitionally protected household members in receipt of IRB prior to 1 April 2011	Automatically Exempt	Automatically Exempt

6. Application

6.1. Exemption from **prescriptions fees** is granted to all members within a household receiving IRB (except for households that are transitionally protected whereby the exemption applies to transitionally protected members only), individuals who are in receipt of BIP and persons in full time education aged twenty one years or under.. No further application for exemption is required.

6.2. Exemption from **medical fees** is granted to all members within a household receiving IRB (except for households that are transitionally protected whereby the exemption applies to transitionally protected members only) and persons in full time education aged twenty one years or under. No further application for exemption is required.

6.3. Applications for exemption from medical and prescriptions fees for individuals within vulnerable groups, who are not exempted by sections 6.1 or 6.2, should be made to the Social Security Office using the prescribed form in

Annex 2. All supporting documentation required by the Adjudication Officer must be submitted with the application before the application will be adjudicated.

7. Approval Process

- 7.1. On receipt of an application under section 6.3 above the Adjudication Officer shall check whether all documentation to support the application has been submitted before the assessment under this policy is conducted.
- 7.2. An application made under section 6.3 shall be adjudicated within one week from the date on which the application was received and all the documentation has been received.
- 7.3. The applicant will be informed of the outcome of the application via letter from the Social Security Office.
- 7.4. Social Security Office shall submit to the Health Directorate at the end of each week the names of any new persons eligible for exemption medical fees and prescription fees under this policy.

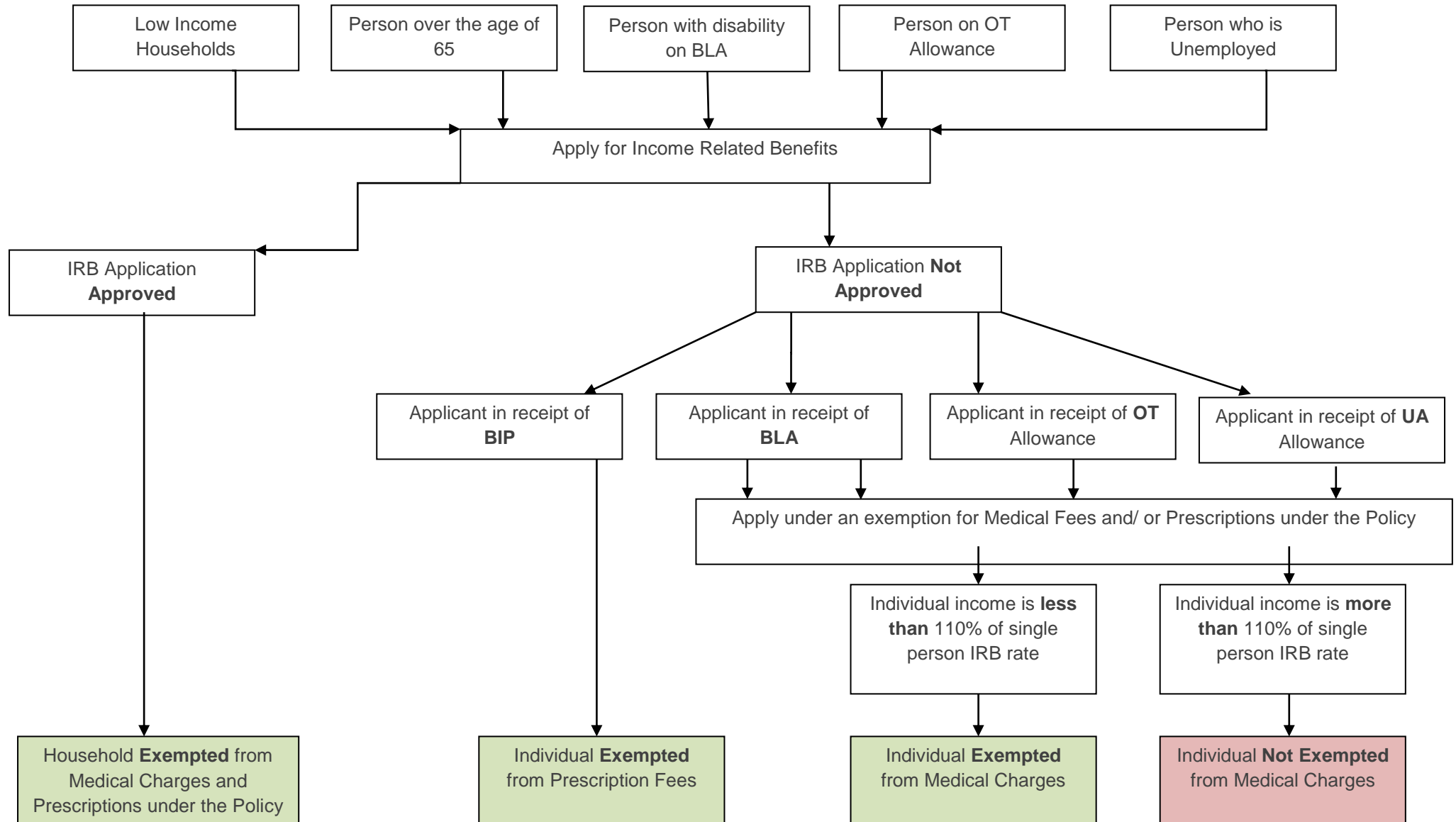
8. Review and Appeal Process

- 8.1. Applicants can appeal a decision made by the Adjudication Officers in applying the policy under the same provisions for appeal as outlined under section 14(1) of the Social Security Ordinance, 2011.

9. Confidentiality

- 9.1. No person may divulge any personal information of an applicant or any information relating to a household which was provided in respect of an application under this Policy, except—
 - 9.1.1. to a person who requires it in order to perform a function under this Policy;
 - 9.1.2. when required to do so by law or by an order of court; or
 - 9.1.3. With the consent of the applicant concerned.

Annex 1. PROCESS MAP: EXEMPTION OF MEDICAL FEES POLICY



Annex 2. APPLICATION FORM

APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION OF MEDICAL AND PRESCRIPTION FEES

FORM TO BE COMPLETED IN BLUE OR BLACK INK AND IN BLOCK LETTERS.

NAME: _____ TELEPHONE NO. _____
ADDRESS: _____ EMAIL _____

DATE OF BIRTH	
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	
WEEKLY INCOME:	£
EARNINGS	
PENSION	
BETTER LIFE ALLOWANCE	
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ALLOWANCE	
UNEMPLOYMENT ALLOWANCE	
PROPERTY/ ASSETS:	
OTHER WEEKLY INCOME	
TOTAL	
BANK DETAILS	

I _____ OF _____ HEREBY
APPLY FOR AN EXEMPTION OF PAYMENT FOR MEDICAL AND PRESCRIPTION FEES

DECLARATION

PLEASE READ THIS DECLARATION CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU SIGN AND DATE

- I HEREBY CERTIFY THE FOREGOING INFORMATION GIVEN BY ME TO BE FULL AND CORRECT.
- I UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE TO GIVE INCOMPLETE OR INACCURATE INFORMATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING FREE MEDICAL.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

SIGNED _____
ADJUDICATION OFFICER
DATE _____

EXEMPTION APPROVED
EXEMPTION NOT APPROVED