

IMPORTANT - CHANGE OF DATES

Please note the following important dates for those wishing to have their payments backdated to 2nd October 2017:

12th January 2018

Ideally all completed forms should be returned to NHS BSA by 12th January 2018.

Any beneficiary wishing to put in an application for SCM in January 2018 but knows that they may need longer to submit their medical evidence **must** notify NHS BSA of this by 12th January 2018. This notification can be via telephone, letter or email – see contact details above. Once received, the NHS BSA will send a letter acknowledging the notification; only those eligible for SCM who have submitted their form or got an acknowledged notification will have their payments backdated to 2nd October 2017.

23rd February 2018 – final deadline for submission of all SCM forms and medical information

Where an individual has notified NHS BSA of their intent to submit an application, and this has been acknowledged by NHS BSA, the completed SCM application forms and supporting medical information **must** be submitted to NHS BSA by 23rd February 2018.

SCM applications in the future

The SCM is an open and on-going scheme so if a beneficiary's circumstances change in the future which may make them eligible for the SCM an application can be submitted to NHS BSA at any time (providing six months has elapsed since the previous application) and if the beneficiary is eligible their payments will be backdated to the date the application is received by NHS BSA.

FAQs on the England Infected Blood Payment Scheme: Special Category Mechanism

What is the England Infected Blood Support Scheme?

The England Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS) has replaced the former infected blood payment schemes previously administered by Skipton Fund, Caxton Fund, Macfarlane Trust, Eileen Trust and MFET Ltd. The purpose of the EIBSS is to provide financial and other support to those infected with HIV and/or Hepatitis C through treatment with NHS blood or blood products.

The EIBSS scheme provides annual payments at two levels for people infected with hepatitis C. Those beneficiaries with hepatitis C who have gone on to develop severe liver disease¹ are automatically eligible for hepatitis C stage 2 payments. All those infected with hepatitis C but have not developed liver disease as listed below are eligible for hepatitis C stage 1 payments.

What is the Special Category Mechanism under EIBSS?

The Special Category Mechanism (SCM) is an assessment process to recognise the substantial and long-term impact that hepatitis C can have on an individual's ability to carry out everyday activities.

What is the SCM for?

The SCM enables a hepatitis C stage 1 beneficiary to receive higher annual payments if infection with the virus or the treatment for it is having a substantial and long-term impact on their ability to carry out everyday activities.

Who can apply?

To make an application for the SCM, the applicant must:

- Already be registered with EIBSS with hepatitis C stage 1; **and**
- Have one of the specific hepatitis C associated conditions detailed in Section 5 of the SCM application form; **or**
- Be able to demonstrate that the hepatitis C infection, or treatment for it, is having a substantial and long-term impact on their ability to carry out everyday activities. This may be due to physical or mental health problems and/or chronic fatigue.

¹ Severe liver disease includes someone with cirrhosis, primary liver cancer, who is in receipt of or has been offered a liver transplant, B-cell non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and Type 2 or 3 Cryoglobulinaemia (only accompanied by membranoproliferative glomerulonephritis (MPGN))

Who can fill in the form?

- Consultant Hepatologist
- Hepatology Nurse
- Consultant Haematologist
- Haematology Nurse
- General Practitioner

If a nurse completes the form, a consultant needs to countersign it.

Other professionals involved in a beneficiary's care, such as a haemophilia social worker, may usefully contribute evidence to support an application but may not sign off the form.

A medical practitioner (or the team of practitioners) is being asked to either confirm a specific diagnosis of a condition linked to hepatitis C, as listed in Section 5 of the SCM application form or to provide an overall clinical opinion as to whether the applicant's infection (or treatment) is causing substantial and long-term impact on their ability to carry out everyday activities due to physical or mental health problems and/or chronic fatigue.

It is acknowledged that other chronic conditions may have the same or similar symptoms to those typically associated with hepatitis C. In this assessment a medical practitioner (or the team of practitioners) is being asked, given their knowledge of the patient, whether symptoms **associated with a chronic hepatitis C infection** are having a substantial and long-term impact on their patient's ability to carry out everyday activities.

Symptoms linked specifically and exclusively to other conditions, such as haemophilia, should not be included in this evidence report. If it is difficult to differentiate symptoms a medical practitioner (or the team of practitioners) should explain the extent to which it is possible to attribute them to the hepatitis C infection.

Can more than one medical practitioner complete the SCM form?

If a beneficiary would like medical information to be submitted by more than one medical practitioner involved in their care this is possible. The combined information can either be signed off by a single medical practitioner on behalf of the team or each medical practitioner can complete a separate SCM form and declaration and these will all be considered. Additional SCM forms are available from NHS BSA either via their website or in the post on request.

Shouldn't this form be completed by the Health Assessment Advisory Service?

The Health Assessment Advisory Service arranges and carries out assessments of benefit claimants on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions. The SCM is **not** an assessment associated with claiming benefits such as Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance. The SCM form needs to be

completed by medical practitioner who is familiar with the difficulties a beneficiary is experiencing due to their hepatitis C infection.

Does a medical practitioner need to provide evidence to support the SCM application?

Where possible, medical evidence should be provided to support the answers on the application form, i.e. evidence of a diagnosis in section 5A or evidence of any other conditions and their link to hepatitis C or its treatment. This evidence can be sourced from other health professionals involved in the applicant's care.

When does the SCM application form need to be submitted?

Ideally all completed forms should be returned to NHS BSA by 12th January 2018.

However, some medical practitioners have indicated that due to the number of forms they have been asked to complete or the need to gather evidence from a range of sources, this deadline may not be practicable. To address this problem and to try to ensure no beneficiaries miss payments due to delays in the system the deadline for the submission of applications affected by delays in gathering medical evidence has been extended to **23rd February 2018**.

Any beneficiary wishing to put in an application for SCM in January 2018 but knows that they may need until 23rd February 2018 to submit their medical evidence must notify NHS BSA of this by 12th January 2018 (this notification can be via telephone, letter or email – see contact details below). Once received the NHS BSA will send a letter acknowledging the notification.

The completed SCM application with all the necessary medical documentation should be submitted as soon as it is available. If an acknowledged notification is made by 12th January 2018 and the completed application and medical evidence is received by NHS BSA by 23rd February 2018, the SCM payments will be backdated to 2nd October 2017 for eligible applicants.

Eligible SCM applications started after 12th January 2018 or one that fails to have the necessary medical evidence in place by 23rd February 2018 will only have payments backdated to the date the full application is received by NHS BSA.

Will NHS BSA reimburse beneficiaries for SCM application completion costs?

Beneficiaries will be reimbursed if they are required to pay a medical professional to complete the form. A receipt from the medical professional completing the form will need to be submitted together with the SCM application form or with a covering letter from the beneficiary explaining the charge.

What will be the process once the application has been submitted?

Once the form has been submitted to NHS BSA the forms will be checked to ensure the application is fully completed.

If the form is not complete or there is insufficient evidence, NHS BSA will return the form to the applicant advising the parts of the form they need to complete or if there is any further evidence required. NHS BSA will do this as soon as possible after they have received the application.

When will the outcome of applications be known?

All SCM application forms will be assessed on an ongoing basis.

All SCM applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application as soon as is practicable after the receipt of all the necessary information.

SCM applicants who make a full application with all the necessary information before 12th January 2018 will be notified by NHS BSA as soon as practicable after that date.

SCM applications fulfilled after 12th January 2018 will be notified as soon as their applications have been assessed by NHS BSA.

Payments to eligible applicants will commence immediately thereafter.

When can a new application for SCM be submitted?

A new application for the SCM can be submitted if an individual's circumstances change and if new evidence can be provided. Please note, six months must be allowed to elapse from the submission date of any previous SCM application and will only be considered if new evidence is provided.

What is the appeals process for SCM?

If an application is unsuccessful full details of how an applicant can appeal will be provided. All appeals should be made within 8 weeks of the date of the outcome of the assessment; after that time period the re-submission will be treated as a new application and six months must elapse before the application and newly submitted evidence will be considered.

If an appeal is unsuccessful, a new application can be submitted if an individual's circumstances change. Please note six months must be allowed to elapse from the submission date of any previous SCM application and will only be considered if new evidence can be provided.

What if a beneficiary does not want to apply for higher payments via the SCM at this time?

if a beneficiary does not wish to apply for higher annual payments via the SCM at this time they do not need to do anything and the application form does not need to be completed. If no application is made, a beneficiary's annual hepatitis C stage 1 payments will continue as usual.

The SCM is an open and on-going scheme so a beneficiary receiving hepatitis C stage 1 payments may submit an application for higher annual payments via the

SCM at any time in the future if their circumstances change and they believe they are eligible. If the applicant is eligible for the higher payments under the SCM the increased payments will be made from the date the application is received by NHS BSA.

What if a beneficiary is eligible for hepatitis Stage 2 payments?

A beneficiary whose circumstances have changed and believes they may be eligible for hepatitis C Stage 2 payments should contact NHS BSA and they will inform them of how to apply for the Stage 2 payments; this is separate to the SCM application process.

What if a beneficiary already receives hepatitis C Stage 2 payments?

The SCM application process is only open to those registered for hepatitis C Stage 1 payments from EIBSS; beneficiaries already in receipt of hepatitis Stage 2 payments cannot apply as they already receive higher annual payments.

Can a beneficiary still apply for hepatitis C Stage 2 payments in the future if they in receipt of higher payments under the SCM?

A beneficiary whose circumstances have changed and who believes they may be eligible for hepatitis C Stage 2 payments should contact NHS BSA and they will inform them of how to apply for these payments; this is separate to the SCM application process.

Will this affect a beneficiary's other benefits?

This application will not affect a beneficiary's entitlement to receive other benefits, e.g. from the DWP or HMRC. The SCM support is a higher level of payments paid by EIBSS to those beneficiaries who meet the criteria outlined in the application form. The increased payments received under the SCM will be exempt from any declaration of income as for the payments beneficiaries already receive from EIBSS.

Where should further questions be sent?

Further questions should be directed to the EIBSS team at NHS BSA using the details below.

By post: Freepost EIBSS or

EIBSS
Skipton House
80 London Road
London
SE1 6LN

E-mail: nhsbsa.eibss@nhs.net

Telephone: 0300 330 1294