

The Scotsman



Dear Editor

**Prescription charges must not be a tax on people with long term conditions**

Today's report of the Independent Budget Review (IBR) recommends halting progress towards the abolition of prescription charges. The Scotsman newspaper and organisations such as mine fought for an end to the inequity whereby only those with one of a limited list of conditions are exempt. The news that this policy could be reversed will be deeply worrying for many of the 2 million people who live with long term conditions in Scotland.

More than three quarters of people with long term conditions take prescribed medication (compared with only a quarter of other people) and they are far more likely to rely on multiple treatments.

People with long term conditions are also far more likely to live on low incomes and experience financial difficulty, including debt and inability to meet health-related costs.

We know that people who live with long term conditions sometimes have to choose between different medications, or between prescriptions and other essential expenditure. Halting progress towards abolition of charges for *all* people with long term conditions would lead to poorer health and quality of life, particularly for the most vulnerable, and in turn to greater costs to the public purse.

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