From 1 December 2018, several changes will take place to provide people with greater access to primary care. The changes are part of Budget 2018 and include:

- Extending access to low-cost general practice visits to all CSC holders. This includes injury-related visits (ACC).
- Extending CSC eligibility to all people receiving the accommodation supplement or who are tenants in social housing
- Extending zero-fee general practice visits and exemption from the standard prescription co-payment charge (usually $5 per item) on subsidised prescription items to children under the age of 14. This includes after-hours services and injury related visits (ACC).

The changes provide additional subsidies to enable non very low cost access general practices to charge patients no more than $18.50 for enrolled adults and $12.50 for enrolled youth aged 14-17 for a standard day time nurse or GP consultation.

What you need to know

Zero fees for under-14s

From 1 December 2018, the standard prescription co-payment charge (usually $5 per item) on subsidised prescription medicines will not be charged for children under the age of 14. This is an extension of one year from the current zero fees for under-13s scheme.

DHBs will contract after-hours pharmacy services for under-14s in the same way they currently do for under-13s. This is likely to be an extension to existing contracts that DHBs have in place to provide free after hours services for under-13s.

Vendor systems

Changes have been made to Practice Management Systems to ensure that prescriptions for under-14s are correctly coded as pharmacy patient category ‘Y’ on printed prescriptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Youth aged 0 to 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Juniors aged 14 to 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Adult aged 18 and over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changes to pharmacy systems

Changes are also required to pharmacy systems, and these have already been made by pharmacy system vendors.