

# **AVAILABILITY OF GLUTEN-FREE PRODUCTS ON NHS PRESCRIPTION**

## **CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

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### **RESPONDENT DETAILS**

Royal College of Nursing

Response from:

Helen Donovan Professional Lead for Public Health Nursing on behalf of the Royal College of Nursing: [helen.donovan@rcn.org.uk](mailto:helen.donovan@rcn.org.uk)

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 With a membership of around 435,000 registered nurses, midwives, health visitors, nursing students, health care assistants and nurse cadets, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is the voice of nursing across the UK and the largest professional union of nursing staff in the world. RCN members work in a variety of hospital and community settings in the NHS and the independent

- 1.3 However, there have been anomalies with the prescribing cost options for those with long term conditions which the RCN has previously lobbied to address. As an example only those diabetics on insulin will be exempt from prescription costs - other medication for diabetes is charged<sup>1</sup>. The issue of prescribing costs needs more detailed consultation and discussion to support management of all long term conditions.
- 1.4 The RCN acknowledges that this is a sensitive area and believe it needs a pragmatic and balanced approach. There are considerable demands on NHS resources and a need to rationalise the avail

flour mixes as an important clinical tool to support adherence to a gluten free diet.

2.3 We also know that the plethora of products available makes it very difficult for many prescribers in the primary care setting who are not experts in nutrition. Having a specific list of available products available on the schedule 1 would make it easier for primary care to implement and for CCGs to accommodate.

2.4 The current situation is unfair and has led to wide variation across the country with many CCGs already limiting the prescribing availability for gluten free products and this needs to be addressed.

### 3. CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

3.1

<b>Do you think GF foods should be available on prescription in primary care?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>Please can you explain your answer to question 1.</b>
On balance we believe that certain GF foods should be available on prescription or via some other process to ensure those who are most vulnerable and unable to afford the additional cost. We are also mindful that good quality gluten free products are not universally available and therefore those on very low income or who have reduced access to the larger supermarkets would be disproportionately affected if GF products were not available at all.		

3.2

**Do you think GF prescribing should be restricted to certain foods? Yes or no.**

