



Dear Colleague

GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES (GOS) AND NHS OPTICAL VOUCHERS – LEGISLATION CHANGES

Summary

1. This letter advises on changes to legislation for GOS and NHS optical vouchers in Scotland that comes into effect on 1 July 2022.
2. It also provides a reminder about:
 - the 'first port of call' responsibility for all providers of GOS in Scotland;
 - visual field testing and GOS primary eye examinations;
 - the final deadline for submitting claims to NHS Boards regarding the ventilation enhancement grant.

Action

3. NHS Boards are asked to immediately copy and issue the Memorandum to this letter to all:
 - optometrists, ophthalmic medical practitioners and body corporates on their Ophthalmic Lists;
 - community optometry practices and dispensing only practices in their NHS Board area;
 - hospital eye service staff in their NHS Board, for the purposes of advising them of the revised NHS optical voucher values.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Ferris

Deputy Director

29 June 2022

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards

For information

Chief Executive,
NHS National Services
Scotland

NHS Board Optometric
Advisers

Enquiries to:

nss.psdgospayteam@nhs.scot
(for any queries about the
increases in NHS optical
voucher values);

[local NHS Board](#) (for any
queries about the ventilation
enhancement grant);

eyecare@gov.scot (for any
other queries)

**MEMORANDUM TO NHS:
PCA(O)2022(03)**

Summary

1. On 20 May 2022 [the National Health Service \(Optical Charges and Payments and General Ophthalmic Services\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Regulations 2022](#) ("the 2022 Regulations") were laid before the Scottish Parliament.
2. The 2022 Regulations will make a number of changes on 1 July 2022 to legislation for General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) and NHS optical vouchers in Scotland. These changes are summarised in the [Policy Note](#) for the legislation and paragraphs 4 to 23 of this Memorandum.
3. This Memorandum also provides a reminder about:
 - the 'first port of call' responsibility for all GOS providers in Scotland;
 - visual field testing and GOS primary eye examinations;
 - the final deadline for submitting claims to NHS Boards regarding the ventilation enhancement grant.

NHS optical voucher value uplift

4. The 2022 Regulations increase the values of all NHS optical vouchers redeemed by community optometry practices and dispensing only practices on or after 1 July 2022. Any optical vouchers issued to a patient before 1 July 2022 but redeemed on or after 1 July 2022 are therefore to be redeemed at the new increased amounts.
5. Details of the new NHS optical voucher values are set out in the [Annex](#).

Special facial characteristics supplement – GOS(S)3 and GOS(S)4 NHS optical vouchers

6. Prior to 1 July 2022, only the hospital eye service (HES) could prescribe a special facial characteristics (SFC) supplement on a NHS optical voucher for a patient where a standard spectacle frame would not fit correctly.
7. The 2022 Regulations enable optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners (OMP) in the community to prescribe the SFC supplement on a GOS(S)3 and GOS(S)4 NHS optical voucher on or after 1 July 2022. This change has been introduced to make things more convenient for patients and to help reduce pressure on the HES.
8. A SFC supplement can be prescribed and claimed where a patient requires the spectacle frame to be specially manufactured because of their facial characteristics, and that are clinically appropriate with respect to those facial characteristics. An example may be a patient who has Down's Syndrome.

9. The SFC supplement values are set out in the [Annex](#).

10. The SFC supplement is different from the small glasses (SG) supplement, as outlined in the following table:

Criteria	Small glasses supplement	Special facial characteristics supplement
<p>Glasses that are clinically appropriate, and meet all of the following criteria:</p> <p>(a) are prescribed for a child aged under 7 years on the date the voucher relating to the glasses is issued, and where the voucher is issued at the same time as the prescription relating to those glasses;</p> <p>(b) have a frame which is either custom made or a stock frame requiring extensive adaptation to ensure an adequate fit; and</p> <p>(c) have a boxed centre distance of no more than 55 millimetres. "Boxed centre" is to be construed in accordance with Part 1 of British Standard 3521/91.</p>	Yes	No
Glasses with frames specially manufactured because of the patient's facial characteristics, and that are clinically appropriate with respect to those facial characteristics	No	Yes

11. In circumstances where either a SFC or SG supplement could be prescribed and claimed on a NHS optical voucher, use the one that is most clinically appropriate.

12. As always, practitioners must ensure that their records clearly outline the clinical justification in prescribing the relevant voucher supplement.

13. The GOS(S)3 and GOS(S)4 paper forms and digital payment claim forms on eOphthalmic have not yet been amended to include the SFC supplement. Practitioners will be notified when these changes have been made.

14. In the meantime, when the SFC supplement:

- is being prescribed, on the paper forms practitioners should tick the 'Small glasses' supplement box and annotate the form with 'SFC';
- is being claimed, on the digital payment claim forms practitioners should select the 'Small glasses' supplement box.

GOS Supplementary eye examinations undertaken remotely

15. To help ensure the continued safe management of patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government has allowed GOS providers to submit GOS payment claims to Practitioner and Counter Fraud Services (P&CFS) for remote consultations provided to patients when deemed clinically appropriate and safe.
16. There is general agreement in the community eyecare sector, the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland that the ability to manage a patient remotely (where deemed clinically appropriate and safe, and under certain rules and circumstances) should form a permanent part of GOS in Scotland in order to support safe and accessible care.
17. The 2022 Regulations accordingly amend the GOS legislation to provide the flexibility for GOS to be undertaken using remote facilities.
18. The existing arrangements for providing GOS using remote facilities continues to apply. These are that such eye examinations:
 - can be claimed using supplementary eye examination reason codes 2.5 (anterior eye condition), 2.8 (unscheduled appointment) and 2.9 (cataract referral advice and counselling); and
 - must involve all the elements of an eye examination undertaken in person with the patient, except tests and procedures which require the physical presence of the patient. Any advice and recommendations should be issued and clearly documented in the patient's record. A GOS claim cannot be submitted where remote facilities are only used to ask the patient a series of questions to explore their concerns more fully and make a decision regarding whether the patient requires an eye examination.

Mandatory training for GOS practitioners

19. The 2022 Regulations make the following two changes in respect of the requirement for GOS practitioners to undertake and satisfactorily complete annual mandatory training provided by NHS Education for Scotland:

Introduction of 31 October "cut-off" date

20. An optometrist or OMP who is added to a NHS Board's Ophthalmic List after 31 October in any calendar year will not have to satisfactorily complete the mandatory training for that year if:
 - at the point of that addition, they are not on another NHS Board's Ophthalmic List;and

- they have not been on the NHS Board's Ophthalmic List at any point in the 1 January to 31 October inclusive period of that calendar year.

21. Optometrists or OMPs who meet the above criteria are still encouraged to complete the mandatory training for that calendar year. Further information can be found on the [Turas Learn system](#) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points are available.

Removal of requirement to send mandatory training completion certificates to NHS Boards

22. Optometrists and OMPs were advised in [PCA\(O\)2019\(03\)](#) to cease sending mandatory training completion certificates to their NHS Board, as required under GOS legislation. The 2022 Regulations remove this requirement from GOS legislation on 1 July 2022.

Renaming 'continuing education and training' as 'continuing professional development'

23. The 2022 Regulations replaces the term "continuing education and training" (CET) in GOS legislation with "continuing professional development" from 1 July 2022. This reflects the recent use of the CPD term by the General Optical Council and its use for some time now across other professions. The next annual CPD allowance claims process, which will be communicated to practitioners separately in due course, will also reflect this change.

'First port of call' responsibility for all GOS providers

24. Practitioners are reminded that **all** GOS providers have a 'first port of call' legal requirement as part of their GOS Terms of Service (under [regulation 21B](#) of the NHS (General Ophthalmic Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2006, as amended) to:

- carry out an emergency eye examination on a person presenting with an emergency eye-related problem; or
- if for any reason they cannot examine the person, to take all reasonable steps to make an arrangement with another listed optometrist or OMP, hospital or GP practice to examine the person.

25. All initial presentations should be triaged to determine the urgency, and therefore all GOS providers should ensure that they have sufficient arrangements in place.

26. All contractors, and those to whom they delegate responsibility (e.g. reception staff), are required to find a home for a patient under the first port of call regulatory responsibility. It is not acceptable to tell a patient that there are no appointments available and expect that patient to find alternative care.

Visual field testing and GOS primary eye examinations

27. The [Statement of remuneration for GOS](#) sets out the arrangements for tests and procedures under GOS in Scotland. Appendix C of the Statement sets out the tests and procedures involved in an eye health assessment required for the purposes of a GOS primary eye examination.
28. Practitioners are reminded that, in relation to the “*An eye health assessment appropriate to the patient’s presenting signs, symptoms and needs*” entry in the Table in Appendix C of the Statement, visual field testing should be undertaken as part of a primary eye examination when the GOS practitioner considers this to be clinically appropriate and relevant to the presenting signs, symptoms and needs of the patient.

Ventilation Enhancement Grant – deadline for receipt of claims

29. In accordance with [PCA\(O\)2022\(02\)](#), community optometry practice premises that notified their local NHS Board by 31 March 2022 of their commitment to purchase ventilation enhancement equipment and intention to submit a claim are reminded that **the deadline for receipt of such claims is 30 June 2022**.
30. All claim forms, relevant invoices and receipts should be sent as soon as possible to the local NHS Board. **Claims received after 30 June 2022 will not be paid.**
31. If the local NHS Board is satisfied that the claim is complete, and relevant invoices and receipts have been provided, they must notify P&CFS by Wednesday 10 August 2022. P&CFS will then process and pay the relevant grant amount to the practice in the July 2022 (paid August 2022) schedule.

Enquiries

32. Any queries about the increase in NHS optical voucher values outlined in this Memorandum should be emailed to P&CFS at: nss.psdgospayteam@nhs.scot.
33. Any queries about the ventilation enhancement grant should be emailed to the relevant NHS Board, contact details for whom can be found on the [Eyes.Scot website](#).
34. Any other queries about this Memorandum should be emailed to the Scottish Government at: eyecare@gov.scot.

Dentistry, Optometry and Audiology Division
Directorate of Primary Care
Scottish Government

Annex**NHS optical voucher values from 1 July 2022**

Type of optical appliance	Previous value	New value
A. Glasses with single vision lenses of a spherical power of not more than 6 dioptres with a cylindrical power of not more than 2 dioptres.	£39.10	£39.90
B. Glasses with single vision lenses- (a) of a spherical power of more than 6 dioptres but less than 10 dioptres with a cylindrical power of not more than 6 dioptres; (b) of a spherical power of less than 10 dioptres with a cylindrical power of more than 2 dioptres but not more than 6 dioptres.	£59.30	£60.50
C. Glasses with single vision lenses of a spherical power of 10 or more dioptres but not more than 14 dioptres with a cylindrical power of not more than 6 dioptres.	£86.90	£88.60
D. Glasses with single vision lenses- (a) of a spherical power of more than 14 dioptres with any cylindrical power; (b) of a cylindrical power of more than 6 dioptres with any spherical power.	£196.00	£199.90
E. Glasses with bifocal lenses of a spherical power of not more than 6 dioptres with a cylindrical power of not more than 2 dioptres.	£67.50	£68.80
F. Glasses with bifocal lenses- (a) of a spherical power of more than 6 dioptres but less than 10 dioptres with a cylindrical power of not more than 6 dioptres; (b) of a spherical power of less than 10 dioptres with a cylindrical power of more than 2 dioptres but not more than 6 dioptres.	£85.60	£87.30
G. Glasses with bifocal lenses of a spherical power of 10 or more dioptres but not more than 14 dioptres with a cylindrical power of not more than 6 dioptres;	£111.20	£113.40
H. Glasses with prism-controlled bifocal lenses of any power or with bifocal lenses- (a) of a spherical power of more than 14 dioptres with any cylindrical power; (b) with a cylindrical power of more than 6 dioptres with any spherical power.	£215.50	£219.80
I. (Hospital Eye Service) Glasses not falling within any of categories A-H for which a prescription is given in consequence of a sight test by the Hospital Eye Service.	£200.80	£204.80
J. (Hospital Eye Service) Contact lenses for which a prescription is given in consequence of a sight test by the Hospital Eye Service.	£57.00	£58.15

	Previous value	New value
Complex Lens Voucher		
Single Vision	£14.60	£14.90
Bifocal	£37.40	£38.15
Tints/photochromic Lens Supplement (per lens)		
Single Vision	£4.40	£4.50
Bifocal	£4.90	£5.00
Prism (per lens)		
Single Vision	£12.60	£12.85
Bifocal	£15.40	£15.70
Small Glasses Supplement		
	£64.20	£65.50
Special Facial Characteristics Supplement		
	£64.20	£65.50

NHS optical voucher repair or replacement values from 1 July 2022

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
One lens	£12.40	£22.70	£36.75	£92.40	£26.85	£36.10	£49.15	£102.35	£94.85
Two lenses	£24.80	£45.40	£73.50	£184.80	£53.70	£72.20	£98.30	£204.70	£189.70
Front of frame	£12.70	£12.70	£12.70	£12.70	£12.70	£12.70	£12.70	£12.70	£12.70
Side of frame	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50
Whole frame	£15.10	£15.10	£15.10	£15.10	£15.10	£15.10	£15.10	£15.10	£15.10

Note:

Where more than one repair is made to an optical appliance:

- in the case of a repair involving the lenses, the value of this element must not exceed the aggregate of the amounts for replacing two lenses in the above table;
- in the case of a repair involving the frame, the value of this element must not exceed £15.10 (increased from £14.80).

Where the small glasses supplement or special facial characteristics supplement applies, the additional amount payable for repair of:

- the whole of the frame is £65.50 (increased from £64.20);
- the front of the frame is £58.15 (increased from £57.00);
- the side of the frame is £31.40 (increased from £30.80).

Replacement - Contact lenses

If only one of a pair of contact lenses is replaced the voucher value is £58.15 (increased from £57.00). This only applies to clinically necessary contact lenses prescribed by the Hospital Eye Service.