



THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

Department of Health

Dear Colleague

HOSPITAL EYE SERVICE:

1. AMENDMENTS TO THE NHS (OPTICAL CHARGES AND PAYMENTS) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 1998
2. INCREASE IN SPECTACLE VOUCHER VALUES AND CHANGES IN DEFINITIONS: FROM 1 APRIL 1999
3. LEAFLETS

Summary

1. This letter advises Health Boards and NHS Trusts of increases in the NHS spectacle voucher values and the allowances for repairs and replacements with effect from 1 April 1999. It also advises of changes in the definition of voucher bands, and a new definition for small glasses, which also take effect from 1 April 1999.

The National Health Service (Optical Charges and Payments) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1999

2. Health Boards and NHS Trusts are asked to note the changes to the NHS (Optical Charges and Payments) (Scotland) Regulations 1998, which are explained in more detail in Annex A to this letter.

Increase in Spectacle Voucher Values

3. The Regulations increase spectacle voucher values and the allowances for repairs and replacements. The new amounts are shown in Annexes B and C to this letter. The revised values will apply to vouchers presented to suppliers by patients **on or after 1 April 1999**.

Reconfiguration of Voucher Bands

4. The voucher bands have been reconfigured at Annex B to bring them into line with the definitions used in the price lists issued by some of the main optical wholesalers.

NHS
MEL(1999)43

NHS Management Executive
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Edinburgh EH1 3DG

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Addressees

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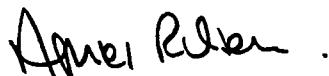
Leaflets

5. The following leaflets are being updated:

- **HC11 Patient's leaflet;**
- **HC12 NHS charges and optical voucher values.**

6. Any enquiries about the content of this letter should be addressed to Mr Brian D West, Room 430, St Andrew's House (Tel: 0131 244 2506, Fax: 0131 244 2866 or E-mail: Brian.West@scotland.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely



AGNES ROBSON
Director of Primary Care

**THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (OPTICAL CHARGES AND PAYMENTS)
(SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 1999**

Increase in Spectacle Voucher Values

1. An increase of 2.6% has been made in voucher values and supplements with the exception of vouchers D and H, which provide for the highest powered prescriptions in single vision and bifocal glasses, which have been increased by 18%. The prism supplement and complex lens voucher have also been increased at a higher rate. The new voucher values are set out in Annexes B and C. The new values apply to vouchers presented to suppliers by patients on or after 1 April 1999.

Reconfiguration of Voucher Bands

2. The bands have been reconfigured to bring them into line with the definitions used by some of the main optical wholesalers.

Reading Additions over 4 Dioptres

3. The regulations have been amended to provide help to the small group of people with poor reading vision, who might otherwise seek to apply for a low vision aid. Where a patient has a prescription, the reading segment of which is more than 4 dioptres more powerful than the distance segment, the voucher appropriate to bifocal spectacles will be determined by the power of the reading segment. For all other prescriptions the voucher will continue to be determined by the power of the distance segment.

Small Glasses

4. The original intention of this supplement was to provide help with the cost of production of frames smaller than those available from stock. However, there are now frames within the present small frame supplement definition which are available from stock and are not significantly more expensive than larger frames. A new "small glasses" supplement has been introduced to compensate for the additional costs of supplying and fitting small glasses including, where appropriate, the supply of lenses worked for minimum substance. The definition is:

"small glasses" means glasses for a child under seven years who needs a custom made or a stock spectacle frame which requires extensive adaptation to ensure an accurate fit and has a boxed centre of no more than 55mm. For this purpose a boxed centre is to be construed in accordance with Part 1 of British Standard 3521/91 (Terms relating to optics and spectacle frames) published by the British Standards Institution.

ANNEX A - continued

5. Examples of "extensive adaptation" are:

- reductions or increases in the length of sides;
- manipulations to reduce or increase the bridge width which **cannot** be achieved solely by adjustment of the pads;
- lenses with a high, positive spherical power worked to minimum substance (either by the practice or a wholesale supplier).

6. Before the supplement is claimed suppliers, who will be registered opticians or ophthalmic medical practitioners, should check that the above conditions are met including measurement of the frame to ensure that it is within the prescribed size limits.

7. Where, exceptionally, patients aged 7 or over require small glasses, the Health Board should be consulted.

Prisms

8. to bring the value of the prism supplement in line with costs, the prism supplement for single vision lens has been increased to £6.00. The supplement for bifocals has been increased by 2.6%.

Photochromic Lenses

9. The definition of the tint supplement has been extended to include photochromic lenses. Tint vouchers may therefore be issued to patients **who have a clinical need for protection from direct light**.

Complex Lens Voucher

10. The complex lens voucher for single vision spectacles has been increased to £10.00 to provide a more significant contribution to the optical costs of patients who require costly appliances but are ineligible under the Low Income Scheme. The voucher for bifocals has been increased by 2.6%. Practitioners are reminded that these vouchers are **not** available to patients who are eligible on age or low income grounds to a lettered voucher. The supplements listed at Annex B may, however, be added to a complex lens voucher, where the patient's needs meet the appropriate criteria.

Other Provisions

11. Changes have been made to:

regularise the arrangements whereby an eligible patient with a current prescription may be issued a spectacle voucher without having to undergo another sight test;

ANNEX A - continued

extend the life of the voucher from 6 months to 2 years (to bring it in line with the maximum life of a prescription);

allow Health Boards to authorise an optical practice to issue a replacement for a lost voucher (once they are satisfied that the voucher has not already been used) instead of issuing the replacement themselves;

provide that patients, who opt to buy glasses by instalment and then establish that they are eligible for a refund of a voucher value, do not receive payment of the refund until they have paid instalments equivalent to its value;

establish beyond doubt that the designated day from which patients have 3 months to apply for a refund is the date on which they pay for the supply of the glasses (either in full or by first instalment).

ANNEX B**VOUCHER LETTER CODES AND FACE VALUES -
SUPPLY AND REPLACEMENT FROM 1 APRIL 1999**

TYPE OF OPTICAL APPLIANCE	LETTER CODE	VOUCHER VALUE
1. 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.	A	£28.70
2. 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.	B	£43.60
3. 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;	C	£59.40
4. 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.	D	£134.20
5. Glasses with bifocal lenses of a spherical power of not more than 6 dioptres with a cylindrical power of not more than 2 dioptres.	E	£49.50
6. 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.	F	£63.00
7. 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.	G	£75.80
8. 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) of a cylindrical power of more than 6 dioptres with any spherical power.	H	£147.50
9. (HES) Glasses not falling within any of paragraphs 1 to 8 for which a prescription is given in consequence of a testing of sight by an NHS Trust.	I	£147.50
10. Contact lenses for which a prescription is given in consequence of a testing of sight by an NHS Trust.	J	£42 per lens

ANNEX B - continued

Supplements

Complex Lens Voucher	Old Value	New Value
Single Vision	£4.60	£10.00
Bifocal	£24.80	£25.40

Tints/photchromic - per lens	Old Value	New Value
Single Vision	£2.90	£3.00
Bifocal	£3.40	£3.50

Prism - per lens	Old Value	New Value
Single Vision	£5.40	£6.00
Bifocal	£6.70	£6.90

Small Glasses	Old Value	New Value
Supplement	£46.10	£47.30

Special Facial Characteristics (Hospital Eye Service)	Old Value	New Value
Supplement	£46.10	£47.30

VOUCHER VALUES FOR REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT FROM 1 APRIL 1999

NATURE OF REPAIR:	LETTER CODES							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H & I
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
One lens	8.90	16.40	24.30	52.90	19.40	26.00	32.50	58.70
Two lenses	18.00	32.90	48.70	105.90	38.80	52.10	65.10	117.50
Front of frame	9.20	9.20	9.20	9.20	9.20	9.20	9.20	9.20
Side of Frame	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
Whole frame	10.80	10.80	10.80	10.80	10.80	10.80	10.80	10.80

Note:

1. Where the small frame supplement or special facial characteristics supplement applies, the amount payable for repair of:

- the front frame is £42.00
- the side frame is £22.70
- the whole of the frame is £47.30

2. Where more than one repair is made to an optical appliance, the total paid must not exceed the aggregate of the amounts for replacing two lenses in the above schedule, and repairs to the part of the frame must not exceed £10.80.

Replacement - Contact Lenses

3. If only one of a pair of contact lenses is replaced the voucher value is £42.00. These provisions for contact lenses only apply to clinically necessary contact lenses prescribed by the Hospital Eye Service or NHS Trust.