



Dear Colleague

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

Summary

1. This letter advises on:
 - Changes to legislation for NHS optical vouchers in Scotland that will increase NHS optical voucher values from 1 April 2024;
 - Changes to legislation for GOS that will come into effect from 1 April 2024.

Action

2. 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 (HES) manager(s) in their NHS Board, for onward distribution to relevant HES colleagues for the purposes of advising them of the revised NHS optical voucher values.
3. NHS Boards are also asked to note the changes to the legislation for GOS (in particular those relating to Ophthalmic Listing) and ensure, where relevant, that they follow and apply those changes from 1 April 2024.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Ferris

Deputy Director
Dentistry, Optometry and Audiology Division

26 February 2024

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 relating to the
increase in NHS optical voucher
values)

eyecare@gov.scot (for any
other queries)

**MEMORANDUM TO NHS:
PCA(O)2024(01)**

Summary

1. On 8 February 2024 [the National Health Service \(Optical Charges and Payments and General Ophthalmic Services\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Regulations 2024](#) ("the 2024 Regulations") were laid before the Scottish Parliament.
2. The 2024 Regulations will, subject to scrutiny by the Parliament, make a number of changes from 1 April 2024 to legislation for NHS optical vouchers and General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) in Scotland. These changes are summarised in the [Policy Note](#) for the legislation and paragraphs 3-15 of this Memorandum.

NHS optical voucher values increase

3. The 2024 Regulations will increase the values of all NHS optical vouchers in Scotland:
 - (for GOS(S)3 and HES(S)3 vouchers) accepted by a supplier on or after 1 April 2024 from a patient for payment or part payment for the supply of an optical appliance;
 - (for GOS(S)4 vouchers) used by a supplier on or after 1 April 2024 as payment or part payment for the repair or replacement of an optical appliance.
4. A NHS optical voucher issued to a patient in Scotland before 1 April 2024, but accepted or used by a supplier as payment or part payment for the supply or repair or replacement of an optical appliance on or after 1 April 2024, is therefore to be accepted or used at the new increased amounts. For the avoidance of doubt, the date of acceptance or use of an optical voucher does not mean the date on which the supplier submits an optical voucher payment claim to Practitioner and Counter Fraud Services (P&CFS).
5. Further details of the new NHS optical voucher values are set out in [Appendix A](#).

Amended time period for submitting GOS eye examination payment claims

6. The 2024 Regulations will amend [paragraph 13\(1\) of schedule 1 of the National Health Service \(General Ophthalmic Services\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2006](#) ("2006 Regulations") by reducing the time period within which GOS claims may be submitted, from 6 months after the date of the eye examination to 3 months. This change will be implemented on 1 April 2024.

7. In practical terms, this means the following:

- **Eye examinations carried out on and after 1 April 2024** – contractors will have 3 months after the date of completion of the eye examination to submit the claim to P&CFS. Contractors will be unable to submit claims which fall outwith this period.
- **Eye examinations carried out prior to 1 April 2024** – it is not possible to maintain two different rule sets within the P&CFS payment system in relation to the time period applicable to the submission of claims. Hence the effect of the amendments made by the 2024 Regulations is that **claims with an eye examination date prior to the implementation of this change will be impacted.**

8. Contractors are therefore reminded, as per paragraphs 2-4 of [PCA\(O\)2023\(06\)](#), to ensure the timeous submission of all GOS(S)1 claims to P&CFS, to avoid the situation where they cannot submit a claim on or after 1 April 2024 because it falls outwith the new submission time period of 3 months after the date of the eye examination.

Removal of requirement to capture patient / patient representative signatures for GOS eye examinations

9. As set out in paragraph 37 of [PCA\(O\)2020\(04\)](#), the requirement to capture patient / patient representative signatures on the GOS(S)1 “cheque book” form (referred to in the 2006 Regulations as a “patient practice record form”) was operationally suspended on 20 March 2020 as part of COVID-19 safety measures.
10. Further to the most recent update provided in paragraphs 22-25 of [PCA\(O\)2023\(03\)](#), the 2024 Regulations will amend regulations 2, 22 and 23 of the 2006 Regulations from 1 April 2024 by removing the requirement for a patient practice record form to be completed by a patient or the patient’s representative as part of the process of applying to have a GOS eye examination in Scotland.
11. The “Patient’s Declaration” section of the eOphthalmic GOS(S)1 form will eventually be removed to reflect this change in legislation, but until then practitioners should continue to confirm a notional signature by the patient / patient representative and now enter “**NA**” (instead of “COVID”) in the field which allows the name of a patient’s representative to be recorded.
12. Practices are asked to note this update and destroy any unused “cheque book” forms that they may currently possess. Any ordering requests by practices for this form will not be fulfilled.

Changes to Ophthalmic List process and criteria for removal of optometrist / ophthalmic medical practitioner (OMP) for not providing GOS in Health Board area

13. In order to reduce the administrative burden for Health Boards with regards maintaining Ophthalmic Lists, and to ensure more consistency across the arrangements that apply to both parts of the Ophthalmic List, the 2024 Regulations will amend [regulation 12](#) of the 2006 Regulations from 1 April 2024.

14. This will:

- Amend to 12 months (from 6 months) the time period for not providing GOS. The effect of this is that where a Health Board determines that an optometrist or OMP included on the first part of the Ophthalmic List has not provided GOS in its area during the preceding 12 months, it shall remove that person from its Ophthalmic List.
- Remove the requirement for a Health Board to consult with its Area Optical Committee / Area Medical Committee, prior to removing an optometrist or OMP from either part of the Health Board's Ophthalmic List for not having provided, or assisted in the provision of, GOS in its area within the last 12 months.

Removal of requirement for mobile practices to provide Health Boards with advance notice of certain visits to day centres and residential centres

15. In order to reduce the administrative burden for Health Boards and contractors, the 2024 Regulations will revoke [paragraph 5 of schedule 1](#) of the 2006 Regulations from 1 April 2024. This will remove the requirement for a mobile practice to give the relevant Health Board notice of visits that it intends to make to a day centre or residential centre in the Board's area.

Enquiries

16. Any queries relating to the increase in NHS optical voucher values should be emailed to P&CFS at: nss.psdgospayteam@nhs.scot.

17. Any other queries about this Memorandum should be emailed to the Scottish Government at: eyecare@gov.scot.

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

Appendix A

NHS optical voucher values from 1 April 2024

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.	£41.70	£42.40
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.	£63.20	£64.26
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.	£92.60	£94.14
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.	£208.90	£212.40
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.	£71.90	£73.10
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.	£91.20	£92.72
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;	£118.50	£120.48
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.	£229.70	£233.56
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.	£214.00	£217.58
J. (Hospital Eye Service) Contact lenses for which a prescription is given in consequence of a sight test by the Hospital Eye Service (the amount shown is per lens).	£60.75	£61.77

	Previous value	New value
Complex Lens Voucher (available to patients who have a complex prescription (+/- 10 dioptries or more) but are not eligible for an optical voucher)		
Single Vision	£15.55	£15.81
Bifocal	£39.90	£40.57
Tints/photochromic Lens Supplement (per lens)		
Single Vision	£4.70	£4.77
Bifocal	£5.20	£5.28
Prism (per lens)		
Single Vision	£13.45	£13.67
Bifocal	£16.40	£16.67
Small Glasses Supplement	£68.45	£69.60
Special Facial Characteristics Supplement	£68.45	£69.60

NHS optical voucher repair or replacement values from 1 April 2024

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
One lens	£13.17	£24.10	£39.04	£98.17	£28.52	£38.33	£52.21	£108.75	£100.76
Two lenses	£26.34	£48.20	£78.08	£196.34	£57.04	£76.66	£104.42	£217.50	£201.52
Front of frame	£13.47	£13.47	£13.47	£13.47	£13.47	£13.47	£13.47	£13.47	£13.47
Side of frame	£7.98	£7.98	£7.98	£7.98	£7.98	£7.98	£7.98	£7.98	£7.98
Whole frame	£16.06	£16.06	£16.06	£16.06	£16.06	£16.06	£16.06	£16.06	£16.06

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 £16.06 (increased from £15.80).

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

- the front of the frame is £61.77 (increased from £60.75);
- the side of the frame is £33.35 (increased from £32.80);
- the whole of the frame is £69.60 (increased from £68.45).

Replacement - Contact lenses

If only one of a pair of contact lenses is replaced the voucher value is £61.77 (increased from £60.75). This only applies to clinically necessary contact lenses prescribed by the Hospital Eye Service.