



Department  
of Health

28 March 2017

**GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES: NHS SIGHT TEST FEE, NHS OPTICAL VOUCHER VALUES, PAYMENTS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND PRE-REGISTRATION SUPERVISORS GRANT**

**Summary**

I am writing to notify you of:

- 1) The NHS sight test fee and NHS domiciliary fees from 1 April 2017
- 2) Optical voucher values from 1 April 2017
- 3) The Hospital Eye Service charges from 1 April 2017
- 4) Continuing education and training payment for 2016, payable in 2017; and
- 5) Grant payable to supervisors of pre-registration trainees from 1 April 2017;

Please could you bring this information to the attention of all staff dealing with General Ophthalmic Services, the Hospital Eye Service, Optometrists and Ophthalmic Medical Practitioners.

**1. NHS sight test fee/NHS domiciliary fee**

The NHS sight test fee and NHS domiciliary fees remains unchanged for 2017/18 and payments should continue to be made in accordance with the General Ophthalmic Services Contracts (Payments) Directions 2015, issued on 5 August 2015.

**2. NHS Optical Voucher Values**

NHS optical voucher values for 2017/18 will remain at the same level as 2016/17 and the relevant Statutory Instrument can be found at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi) under SI number 325 (2016).

**3. Hospital Eye Service**

**Maximum Charge**

From 1 April 2017 the Hospital Eye Service maximum charges, which will continue to be:

£70.00 for single vision lenses; and  
£113.80 in any other case.

### **Charge for Contact Lenses**

From 1 April 2017 the charge for contact lenses will continue to be £57.00 per contact lens supplied.

The NHS (Charges for Optical Appliances) Directions 2016 remain in force.

### **4. Payments for Continuing Education and Training**

The payment for 2016, in respect of continuing education and training, undertaken by optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners, without another medical appointment (i.e. who do no other remunerative work but the testing of sight), will increase to £545.

Payments will be made in respect of claims made by optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners relating to CET training undertaken during the year from 1 January to 31 December 2016. This year the claim period will be between 1 July – 31 October 2017.

Payments should be made in accordance with The General Ophthalmic Services Contracts (Continuing Education and Training Allowance) Payment Directions 2017 and the attached guidance (Annex A).

A claim form is available on the gov.uk website and may be downloaded for completion and submission to Primary Care Support England.

Regional Teams (or their support agency) are asked to provide optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners listed with them with a copy of the note at Annex A and a copy of the claim form. They may wish to do this at the same time as sending out payment advice rather than making a separate mailing.

### **5. Pre-registration Training for Optometrists**

From 1 April 2017 the allowance paid to supervisors of pre-registration trainees will increase to £3,514. Claims from trainers taking on pre-registration trainees on or after 1 April 2017 should be paid at this new rate.

Yours sincerely,

Hamid Butt  
Head of Dental & Eye Care Finance

## **Annex A**

### **General Ophthalmic Services - payments for continuing education and training (CET)**

The Department of Health has agreed with the optical profession and the British Medical Association that a payment should be made in respect of loss of earnings associated with continuing education and training.

#### **The payment**

The payment in respect of CET undertaken between 1 January to 31 December 2016 is £545 and will be payable in 2017. The payment is due in respect of -

(a) optometrists; and

(b) ophthalmic medical practitioners, who conduct only sight tests and have no other remunerated medical employment (such as hospital work or general practice),

who were on the ophthalmic performers list for at least six months between 1 January to 31 December 2016 and have maintained their professional registration. The payment is for having undertaken appropriate continuing education and training.

**Claims must be made in writing to Primary Care Support England** and be made by contractors whether the contractor is claiming for him/herself or for an ophthalmic performer.

For contractors on a Performers List who are claiming a payment in respect of CET they personally have undertaken, the claim form should identify the Regional Team in whose area they have a contract and with which they undertake the most work (if they have a contract with more than one Regional Team).

When contractors claim for a performer, the claim should normally be made by and paid to the contractor for whom the performer works. Where a performer is employed by two or more contractors, the CET allowance should be claimed by and paid to the contractor whom the performer nominates for the purpose of payment of the CET allowance. The claim form should identify the Regional Team which manages that performer's Performers' List arrangements.

A separate claim shall be made for each performer in respect of whom an allowance is payable and only one claim shall be made for each performer.

Payments must be made to contractors. Arrangements for payments to individual performers are a matter for agreement between contractors and performers and not a matter for the NHS. In cases where the contractor has provided or made available to the performer in paid time, or under an alternative arrangement agreed between them, sufficient CET to enable the performer to meet the statutory requirements for compulsory CET (in the case of an optometrist subject to the requirements of the

GOC) then the payment may be retained by the contractor. However if the contractor has not provided or made available to the practitioner sufficient CET to enable them to meet the statutory requirements for compulsory CET, the payment is due to the performer.

For ophthalmic medical practitioners the payment may only be made to practitioners who have no other medical appointment i.e. who do no other remunerative work than the testing of sight.

A claim may only be paid in respect of somebody who has maintained their professional registration during 2016. Performers who are no longer registered or on the performers list at the time of making the claim, for example because of retirement, must produce evidence to show they were registered and on the performers list during the relevant period in support of their claim.

Performers are not required to produce direct evidence of undertaking CET as a compulsory part of the claim or pre-condition of payment as this is already a condition of continuing registration. However, Primary Care Support England/Regional Teams may conduct sample or selective checks if they deem it necessary to test the probity of NHS payments after they have been made.

The claim form may be downloaded by Regional Teams for issue to contractors on their lists. Contractors or performers may also, if they wish, download the form for submission to Primary Care Support England.

This year the period for making claims runs from 1 July to 31 October 2017.