

PCT Chief Executives
NHSCB Area Teams
NHS Trust Chief Executives

26 March 2013

Gateway Reference 18838

Dear Colleague

GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES: INCREASES TO NHS OPTICAL VOUCHER VALUES FROM 1 APRIL 2013 AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Summary

1. I am writing to notify you of the increase in optical voucher values and supplements by an overall 1.0%. Hospital Eye Service charges have also increased and are detailed below.
2. Please could you bring these increases to the attention of all staff dealing with general ophthalmic services; clinicians, optometrists, ophthalmic medical practitioners and other staff concerned with the hospital eye service; and stationery clerks.
3. This letter also advises on the introduction of Universal Credit.

NHS Optical Voucher Values

3. Please pay suppliers the increased voucher values in respect of all vouchers presented by patients on or after 1 April 2013.
4. Please note that the Statutory Instrument amending the National Health Service (Optical Charges and Payments) Regulations has been laid and is available at www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi under SI number 2013 No 461 for those of you who wish to hold a copy.
5. Details of the new optical voucher values are in Annex 1 & 2:
Annex 1: Revised optical voucher values and supplements.
Annex 2: Revised voucher values for repair and replacement.

Hospital Eye Service (HES)

Maximum Charge

6. From 1 April 2013, the HES maximum charges will be:

£67.30 for single vision lenses; and
£109.40 in any other case.

Charge for Contact Lenses

7. From 1 April 2013 the charge for contact lenses will be £54.70 per contact lens supplied.

The NHS (Charges for Optical Appliances) Determination 2012

8. The National Health Service (Charges for Optical Appliances) Determination 2013 is attached at Annex 3.

Implementation of a new charges exemption for Universal Credit

9. A new benefit, Universal Credit (UC), will be introduced by the Department for Work and Pensions on 29 April 2013. UC will initially be introduced in 4 pathfinder areas: Oldham, Tameside, Warrington and Wigan. Regulations have been amended to provide exemption for all those involved in the pathfinder between 29 April and the end October 2013. Revised arrangements will be put in place for wider roll out of UC in due course.

Existing exemption arrangements will continue as normal.

10. UC claimants, their partners, and any children included in the UC award, will qualify for help with health costs. Help with health costs includes:

- Free NHS prescriptions
- Free NHS dental Treatment
- Free wigs and fabric supports
- Free sight tests
- Access to optical vouchers to help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses
- Assistance with the costs of travel to an NHS appointment on referral by a primary care practitioner (eg doctor, dentist or optician).

11. We will not be issuing revised forms in time for the pathfinder start date, so we have put in place a workaround, which will enable patients to make a valid declaration of entitlement. The patient will be instructed to tick the box for income based jobseekers allowance and they should show their UC award notice as evidence of entitlement.

Yours sincerely
Derek Busby
Head of Ophthalmic Services

Annex 1

Voucher Values and Supplements from 1 April 2013 Type of optical appliance	Old 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.	£37.10	£37.50
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.	£56.40	£57.00
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.	£82.60	£83.40
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.	£186.50	£188.40
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.	£64.20	£64.80
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; of a spherical power of less than 10 dioptres with a cylindrical power of more than 2 dioptres but not more than 6 dioptres.	£81.60	£82.40
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;	£105.80	£106.90
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.	£205.10	£207.20
I (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.	£191.00	£192.90
J Contact lenses for which a prescription is given in consequences of a sight test by an NHS trust or NHS foundation trust.	£54.20	£54.70

Complex Lens Voucher	Old value	New value
Single Vision	£14.00	£14.10
Bifocal	£35.50	£35.90
Tints/photochromic Lens Supplement (per lens)		
Single Vision	£4.10	£4.10
Bifocal	£4.60	£4.60
Prism (per lens)		
Single Vision	£12.10	£12.20
Bifocal	£14.60	£14.70
Small Glasses Supplement		
Supplement	£61.20	£61.80
Supplement for Special Facial Characteristics (HES or NHS Trust)		
Supplement	£61.20	£61.80

Annex 2

Repair or Replacement Values from 1 April 2013

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
One lens	11.70	21.45	34.65	87.15	25.35	34.15	46.40	96.55	89.40
Two lenses	23.40	42.90	69.30	174.30	50.70	68.30	92.80	193.10	178.80
Front of frame	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00
Side of frame	7.10	7.10	7.10	7.10	7.10	7.10	7.10	7.10	7.10
Whole frame	14.10	14.10	14.10	14.10	14.10	14.10	14.10	14.10	14.10

Note:

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

the front of the frame is £54.75
the side of the frame is £29.60
the whole of the frame is £61.80

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 £14.10.

Replacement - Contact lenses

3. If only one of a pair of contact lenses is replaced the voucher value is £54.70. These provisions for contact lenses only apply to clinically necessary contact lenses prescribed by the HES or NHS Trust.