

---

STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

---

**1997 No. 191**

**Optical Charges and Payments  
Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997**

**Part III**

**Payments Towards Cost of Sight Tests**

**Eligibility — sight tests**

**3.—(1)** A payment shall be made as provided for by this Part to contribute to the cost of a testing of sight which the Agency accepts as having been incurred by an eligible person.

(2) An eligible person is a person whose income resources, as calculated in accordance with regulation 6 of, and Schedule 1 to, the Remission Regulations for the purposes of remission of charges under the Order, exceed his requirements as so calculated, but whose patient's contribution does not exceed the sight test fee and whose capital resources as so calculated do not exceed the capital limit.

**Completion and use of voucher — sight tests**

**4.—(1)** A person who wishes a payment to be made by virtue of this regulation in his case shall—

- (a) apply to the Department for a notice of entitlement;
- (b) apply for his sight to be tested by an ophthalmic medical practitioner or optician whose name is included in the ophthalmic list;
- (c) indicate to that practitioner or optician that he is an eligible person at the time of the application;
- (d) show to him a current notice of entitlement and permit him to copy such details as may be required for the purposes of regulation 5(2)(b)(ii).

(2) The ophthalmic medical practitioner or optician may then duly complete the relevant parts of the voucher with the name and address of the patient, the patient's date of birth and the date of the testing of sight.

(3) The person whose sight is or is to be tested shall sign on the voucher a declaration in writing to the effect that he is an eligible person.

(4) The ophthalmic medical practitioner or optician may use the voucher as being in substitution for payment by the patient of an amount equal to its redemption value, being part of the cost incurred for the testing of sight.

**Payments to sight testers**

**5.—(1)** The Agency shall, if the conditions specified in paragraph (2) are fulfilled, make a payment of the voucher's redemption value to an ophthalmic medical practitioner or optician who has used a voucher in accordance with regulation 4(4).

- (2) The conditions referred to in paragraph (1) are that—
  - (a) the patient has signed the declaration referred to in regulation 4(3);
  - (b) the ophthalmic medical practitioner or optician has—
    - (i) made a claim for a payment on a duly completed voucher to the Agency within the period of 3 months beginning with the date of the testing of sight, and
    - (ii) informed the Agency of the amount of the patient’s contribution.

**Payments to patients in respect of sight tests**

6.—(1) A payment may be made by way of refund under this regulation by the Agency to an eligible person who incurs the cost of a testing of sight by an ophthalmic medical practitioner or optician whose name is included in the ophthalmic list, without a voucher being completed in accordance with regulation 4.

- (2) A patient who wishes to receive a payment under this regulation must—
  - (a) make a claim to the Department for a payment within 3 months after payment of the sight test fee, or within such further period as the Department may for good cause allow, and that claim must be made on a form provided by or on behalf of the Department for that purpose; and
  - (b) produce such evidence as the Agency may reasonably require in support of the claim including the receipt for any fee paid for the testing of sight.

(3) Where the Department is satisfied that the patient is entitled to a refund under paragraph (1) it shall authorise in writing the refund of the amount in question to the patient by the Agency.

(4) On receipt of an authorisation under paragraph (3), the Agency shall make a refund to the patient of an amount equal to the redemption value of the voucher which could have been completed under regulation 4 if the patient had satisfied the requirements of regulation 4(1).

**Redemption value of voucher for sight test**

7. For the purposes of this Part the redemption value of a voucher is the amount, if any, by which the patient’s contribution falls short of the lesser of—

- (a) the health service sight test fee; or
- (b) the full cost which would have been incurred by the patient for the sight test but for these Regulations.