
EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations.)

These Regulations amend the Optical Charges and Payments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 (“the principal Regulations”) which provide for payments to be made, by means of a voucher system, in respect of costs incurred by certain categories of persons in connection with the supply, replacement and repair of optical appliances.

Regulation 2 revises the level of health service sight test fees and substitutes a new definition of “small glasses” in regulation 1(2). It also inserts a new regulation 1(3)(bb) to provide that, for the purposes of Schedule 1 to the principal Regulations, where an optical appliance has a bifocal lens, the reading segment of which is more than 4 dioptres more powerful than the distance segment, the power of the lens is determined by reference to the power of the reading segment.

Regulation 3 provides for an increase in the charges for glasses and contact lenses supplied by an HSS trust.

Regulation 4 amends regulation 8(2) of the principal Regulations to provide that a person’s status as an eligible person is determined by reference to the time when he pays for the supply of an optical appliance.

Regulation 5 inserts new paragraphs (1A) and (1B) in regulation 9 of the principal Regulations. These paragraphs set out the circumstances in which an ophthalmic medical practitioner or optician may issue a voucher to a patient who has had a recent sight test without needing to re-test his sight.

Regulation 6 substitutes a new regulation 11 which increases to 2 years the period during which a patient may apply for a replacement voucher and provides for the Central Services Agency or an HSS trust to authorise the issue of a replacement voucher rather than itself issuing the replacement.

Regulation 7 increases to 2 years the period during which a patient may present a voucher to a supplier of optical appliances.

Regulation 8 amends a reference in regulation 13(2)(b) of the principal Regulations.

Regulation 9 amends regulation 19 of the principal Regulations (redemption value for replacement or repair) by uprating redemption values of vouchers for replacement or repair.

Regulation 10 amends regulation 20 of the principal Regulations. The regulation amends regulation 20(3) to provide that a claim for payment under regulation 20 must be made by a patient within 3 months after the date on which he paid for the supply, replacement or repair of the optical appliance in respect of which he makes the claim. Regulation 10 also inserts new paragraph (3A) which provides that a patient who pays by instalments for the supply, replacement or repair of an appliance and who makes a claim under regulation 20(2) must make that claim within 3 months of the payment of the first instalment. New paragraph (7) is also inserted which provides that the Central Services Agency must make a refund to the patient in respect of his claim no earlier than the date on which the total value of the instalments paid is at least equivalent to the value of the voucher to which he would have been entitled.

Regulation 11(1) and Part I of the Schedule substitute a new Schedule 1 in the principal Regulations. Regulation 11(2) amends Schedule 2 to the principal Regulations and regulation 11(3) and Part II of the Schedule substitute a new Schedule 3 in the principal Regulations.

Regulation 12 revokes the provisions in Schedule 2 to the principal Regulations concerning the issue or completion by HSS trusts of vouchers in respect of photochromic lenses.

Status: *This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.*

British Standard 3521/91, referred to in regulation 2 may be obtained from the British Standards Institution at 389 Chiswill High Road, London W4 4AL.