

POLICY NOTE

THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (OPTICAL CHARGES AND PAYMENTS) (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENTS REGULATIONS 2015

SSI 2015/86

The above instrument is made in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 70(1), 73(a), 74(a), 105(7) and 108(1) of and paragraphs 2 and 2A of Schedule 11 to the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978. The instrument is subject to negative procedure.

Policy Objectives

The purpose of this instrument is to amend the National Health Service (Optical Charges and Payments) (Scotland) Regulations 1998 (“the 1998 Regulations”) to increase optical voucher values and supplements. Amendments are also made to eligibility criteria to reflect the bases on which individuals receive universal credit.

Annual Uprating of Optical Vouchers in the 1998 Regulations

Optical vouchers provide help towards the purchase of new, or repair or replacement of existing glasses or contact lenses for certain categories of people, including children under 16, those aged 16 to 19 in full-time education and those who require complex lenses. For adults, other than assistance for complex appliances, help is income related with those in receipt of certain benefits being automatically entitled to a voucher while others on low incomes may be entitled to help under the NHS Low Income Scheme.

Regulation 4 of the instrument amends regulation 19 (redemption value of voucher for replacement or repair) of the 1998 Regulations to increase a) the redemption value of a voucher for the replacement of a contact lens; b) the maximum value of a voucher for the repair of a frame; and c) the maximum supplement for small glasses and special frames.

Regulation 5 of the instrument amends Schedule 1 (voucher letter codes and face values – supply and replacement) to the 1998 Regulations to increase the value of vouchers issued towards the supply and replacement of glasses and contact lenses.

Regulation 6 of the instrument substitutes a new Schedule 2 (voucher values – repair) to the 1998 Regulations to increase the value of vouchers issued towards the repair of an optical appliance.

Regulation 7 of the instrument amends Schedule 3 (prisms, tints, photochromic lenses, small glasses and special frames and complex appliances) to increase the supplement values, which can be paid in addition to the voucher value.

Voucher values are normally increased on 1st April each year. The voucher values and supplements are increased by 1%.

Consultation

No consultation has taken place. This is an annual increase so consultation is not considered to be required. Optometry Scotland has been made aware of the increase.

Impact Assessments

An equality impact assessment has not been completed. There are no equality impact issues.

Financial Effects

The Minister for Public Health confirms that no BRIA is necessary as the instrument has no financial effects on local government or on business. The financial effect on the Scottish Government will be met from the General Ophthalmic Services budget.

Scottish Government
Population Health Improvement Directorate
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