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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Regulations)*

These Regulations amend the National Health Service (Optical Charges and Payments) Regulations 1989 (“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 of these Regulations amends the definition in regulation 1(2) of the principal Regulations of “NHS sight test fee” to increase by 5 per cent. the amount by reference to which entitlement to assistance with the cost of a private sight test, and the value of a voucher towards such cost or towards the cost of the supply of glasses or contact lenses, is calculated.

These Regulations also substitute a new Schedule 1 and a new Schedule 3 in the principal Regulations to increase by an average of 9.5 per cent. the value of vouchers issued in respect of the cost of the supply and replacement of glasses and contact lenses (regulation 4(1) and Part I of the Schedule) and of the repair and replacement of appliances (regulation 4(3) and Part II of the Schedule). These Regulations also extend the system of letter codes prescribed in Schedule 1 to the principal Regulations by reference to which the value of the voucher appropriate to any type of optical appliance is determined, and vary the types of appliance to which each letter code relates (regulation 4(1) and Part I of the Schedule). Regulation 3 makes consequential amendments to regulation 20 of the principal Regulations (redemption value of voucher for replacement or repair). Regulation 4(2) increases the additional values for vouchers in respect of prisms, tints, photochromic lenses and special categories of appliances.

These Regulations also amend the definition of “complex appliance” in regulation 1(2) of the principal Regulations, so as to remove a lenticular lens from that definition (regulation 2), and a similar amendment is made to the definition of that expression in regulation 2(1) of the National Health Service (General Ophthalmic Services) Regulations 1986 so that a person may no longer be eligible for a free sight test by virtue only of the fact that he requires a lenticular lens (regulation 5).