

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO  
THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (OPTICAL CHARGES AND PAYMENTS)  
AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2008**

**2008 No. 553**

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Department of Health and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
2. **Description**
  - 2.1 Optical Vouchers are given to eligible members of the public to help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses. These vouchers are updated annually and this SI increases their value for this year.
3. **Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments**
  - 3.1 None.
4. **Legislative Background**
  - 4.1 To effect an increase of 2.7% in voucher values which is in excess of current inflation as measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).
5. **Extent**
  - 5.1 This instrument applies to England.
6. **European Convention on Human Rights**
  - 6.1 As the instrument is subject to the negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.
7. **Policy background**
  - 7.1 The Government recognises that certain groups of the general public should be entitled to help towards the cost of glasses and contact lenses.
  - 7.2 Help towards the cost of glasses and contact lenses is via an NHS optical voucher, the values of which are reviewed annually. The voucher scheme is intended to provide children and people on a low income with a voucher that they may use either to buy from a basic range of spectacles or put towards a more expensive pair of their choice or alternatively put towards the cost of contact lenses. The value of the voucher is determined by the power of the prescription required by the patient. There are 10 voucher bands ranging in value from £35.50 to £196.10 at 2008/09 prices.

## **8. Impact**

8.1 An Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument as it has no impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies.

8.2 We do not consider that these Regulations have any additional implications for equality.

## **9. Contact**

Claire Osborne at the Department of Health Tel: 0207 633 4126 or e-mail: [claire.osborne@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:claire.osborne@dh.gsi.gov.uk) can answer any queries regarding the instrument.