

## **POLICY NOTE**

### **THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (OPTICAL CHARGES AND PAYMENTS AND GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES) (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2015**

**SSI 2015/219**

The Scottish Ministers make the following Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 26, 34, 105(7) and 106(a) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978.

#### **Policy Objectives**

The purpose of this instrument is to amend the National Health Service (General Ophthalmic Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (“the 2006 Regulations”) and the National Health Service (Optical Charges and Payments) (Scotland) Regulations 1998 (“the 1998 Regulations”) to allow ophthalmic contractors to submit forms electronically to receive payment for primary and supplementary eye examinations and for supply and replacement and repair of glasses and contact lenses.

#### **Process Under the 2006 Regulations (General Ophthalmic Services)**

Under the 2006 Regulations, previously ophthalmic contractors submitted claims on paper only for all work undertaken and services provided on behalf of the NHS in Scotland. These paper claims are completed and sent to Practitioner Services Division (PSD) at National Services Scotland where the paper forms are scanned electronically and PSD go through each form to check for errors and ensure the forms have been completed correctly.

In 2010, the Scottish Government approved a national optometry programme to deliver electronic payment and electronic referrals for the optometry community, called the Eye Care Integration Programme.

The new electronic system for payments allows ophthalmic contractors to submit the claim forms electronically to PSD, rather than submitting them via paper. This will be done either directly via a system to system approach or via a web-based system. However, as is the case with dentists and pharmacists, where a similar system has been in place for some time, the arrangements for optometrists is that this will be an opt-in service, so not all practices may choose to do this; some may choose to remain using paper claim forms.

Therefore, the 2006 Regulations are amended to ensure they allow for claims to be made either electronically or on paper.

The introduction of electronic payments for ophthalmic practitioners will bring them in line with other Primary Care contractor groups (GPs, dentists and pharmacists).

#### **Process Under the 1998 Regulations (Optical Charges and Payments)**

Under the 1998 Regulations, some patients are entitled to help with paying for supply of glasses and contact lenses and their replacement or repair. They are issued with optical

vouchers and the optician makes a claim in relation to the voucher value by submitting the voucher to PSD.

Under the e-payments system, dispensing opticians will be able to complete an electronic claim form to send to PSD if they wish. Some practices may choose to continue to use paper forms to submit claims to PSD .

The 1998 Regulations are therefore amended to also allow claims to be sent to PSD either electronically or on paper.

### **Consultation**

The eOphthalmics Project Group has involved a number of stakeholders who have an interest in this, from large multiple organisations, such as Boots and Specsavers to ensure they have been consulted on the procedure. Optometry Scotland has also been consulted on the changes made by the Regulations.

### **Impact Assessments**

An equality impact assessment has not been completed. The purpose of the instrument is to amend both the 1998 and 2006 Regulations due to the upcoming changes as part of the electronic payments process. This process will make it easier for optometrists to send their forms to Practitioner Services, and will not have an effect on patients. There are no equality impact issues.

### **Financial Effects**

The Minister for Public Health confirms that no Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) is necessary as the instrument has no financial effects on the Scottish Government, local government or on business.

Scottish Government  
Population Health Improvement Directorate  
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