
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 and replacement of optical appliances, and make an associated amendment to the Regulations which make provision for general ophthalmic services (ie. sight testing services).

Regulation 2 amends the definition of “complex appliance” to include an optical appliance at least one lens of which is a prism-controlled bifocal lens (and regulation 9 similarly amends the definition of “complex appliance” in the National Health Service (General Ophthalmic Services) Regulations 1986), and regulation 8(1)(b)(i) makes a consequential amendment to the specifications of appliances for which vouchers may be used. Regulation 8(1)(a) and (b)(ii) and (iii) clarify the specifications of appliances to which vouchers with letter codes C and F apply.

These Regulations amend Schedule 1 to, and substitute a new Schedule 3 in, the principal Regulations to increase by an average of 6.00% (11.5% in the case of contact lenses) the value of vouchers issued in respect of the cost of the supply and replacement of glasses and contact lenses (regulation 8(2)) and of the repair and replacement of appliances (regulation 8(4) and the Schedule). Regulation 7 makes consequential amendments to regulation 20 of the principal Regulations (redemption value of voucher for replacement or repair). Regulation 8(3) increases the additional values for vouchers in respect of prisms, tints, photochromic lenses and special categories of appliances.

These Regulations also make amendments in consequence of the provision of NHS services from 1st April 1991 by NHS trusts under the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990.

Regulation 2 amends the definitions of “responsible authority” and “voucher” to make provision in respect of vouchers issued and completed by an NHS trust, and further amendments are made in the principal Regulations by regulations 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8(3)(f)(i) and (g)(i) so that charges and payments may be made, and vouchers issued, in respect of the supply of optical appliances by NHS trusts.

Regulation 10 makes similar consequential amendments in the National Health Service (Charges for Appliances) Regulations 1974.