

OFNC

Association of British Dispensing Opticians
Association of Optometrists
British Medical Association
Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians

Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee

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Chair: Trevor Warburton Secretary: Ann Blackmore

MEDIA RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FREEZES GOS FEES FOR THIRD YEAR RUNNING

The Government has told the OFNC that it is freezing GOS fees for the third year running – despite strong evidence for an increase, and at a time when more generous settlements are being offered to NHS staff and contractors.

OFNC have been offered small increases (1%) on CET fees and grants for pre-registration optometrists.

The response has been one of deep frustration and anger by OFNC on behalf of the profession.

Trevor Warburton, OFNC chair, said that “This continued freeze on fees is completely unacceptable and a real blow. There is no way the profession could sign up to such a position on fees and this is not a ‘negotiated settlement’. This means that, once again, the Department has imposed a real-terms cut on this key public service.”

He added “The profession and GOS providers will be bitterly disappointed, especially when seen against more positive settlements being announced elsewhere and the powerful arguments made by OFNC in support of an increase, including the additional cost burdens on providers. The costs of operating community optical practices have increased every bit as much as for other primary care contractors.”

OFNC secretary Ann Blackmore added: “OFNC have stressed the urgent need for the Department and NHS England to find funding for IT connectivity in the coming year. The short-sighted rejection of previous bids and lack of risk assessment means that patients’ eyesight is at risk from the withdrawal of fax machines for urgent referrals. NHS Mail will be a temporary fix but the NHS drive to be paperless means the problem will return in spades unless there is investment in the optical sector.”

Notes for editors:

1. The Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee (OFNC) is the community eye health equivalent of the BMA’s and BDA’s General Practice Committees and community pharmacist’s pharmaceutical services negotiating committee (PSNC). It is the recognised negotiating body for fees for the professions. Its members include the ABDO, the AOP, the BMA, and FODO.
2. The Chair and secretariat to the OFNC are provided by AOP and FODO.

3. The current membership of OFNC is Trevor Warburton (Optometrist, AOP – Chair OFNC), Henrietta Alderman (AOP CEO), Richard Edwards (Optometrist, FODO), Claire Slade (Optometrist, FODO), Gordon Ilett (AOP), Ian White (Optometrist AOP), Simon Longstaff (OMP BMA), Kim Fowler (BMA), Professor Nagasumbramanian (OMP BMA), Sir Anthony Garrett (CEO ABDO), David Hewlett (CEO FODO). Secretary: Ann Blackmore (FODO).

4. The OFNC is always grateful to receive comments, advice and perspectives from Optical Confederation members and can be contacted via Ann@fodo.com.

5. Papers relating to the 2017-18 fees negotiations round are available at <http://www.opticalconfederation.org.uk/resources/ofnc>

6. Further information can be obtained from the secretary at Ann@fodo.com or on 020 7298 5156.