



Department  
of Health

NHS Commissioning Board

1st July 2014

Dear Colleague,

**General Ophthalmic Services – increases to NHS Sight Test Fee, continuing education and training payment and pre-registration supervisors grant**

**Summary**

1. I am writing to notify you of increases in the:
  - a. NHS sight test fee from 1 April 2014;
  - b. Domiciliary allowances from 1 April 2014;
  - c. Continuing education and training payment for 2013, payable in 2014; and
  - d. Grant payable to supervisors of pre-registration trainees.
2. Please could you bring this information to the attention of staff dealing with general ophthalmic services.

**Increased NHS sight test fee**

3. Following consultations with representatives of the professions, the Secretary of State has determined that the NHS sight test fee should be increased to £21.10.
4. For superannuation purposes please note that for Ophthalmic Medical Practitioners the practice expense component of the sight test fee will be £5.36 from April 2014.
5. Please pay GOS contractors the increased fee for sight tests. Revised General Ophthalmic Services Payment Directions are attached which apply from 1 April 2014.

**Increased NHS domiciliary visiting fees from 1 April 2014**

6. The fees payable to GOS contractors for NHS domiciliary visits is £37.19 for the first and second patients seen at one visit and £9.31 for the third and subsequent patients.

### **Payments for continuing education and training**

7. Following consultations with representatives of the professions, the Secretary of State has agreed that payments should be made in respect of continuing education and training undertaken by optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners without another medical appointment (i.e. who do no other remunerative work but the testing of sight). The payment for 2013 is £529. Payments will be made in respect of claims made by optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners relating to CET training undertaken during the year from 1 January to 31 December 2013. This year the period during which optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners may make their claims will be 14 July – 14 November 2014.
8. Payments should be made in accordance with The General Ophthalmic Services Contracts (Continuing Education and Training Allowance) Payment Directions 2014 and the attached guidance (Annex A).
9. A claim form is also available on the website and may be downloaded for completion and submission to Area Teams.
10. Area Teams (or their support agency) are asked to provide optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners listed with them with a copy of the note at Annex A and a copy of the claim form. They may wish to do this at the same time as sending out payment advice rather than making a separate mailing.

### **Pre-registration Training for Optometrists**

11. From 1 April 2014 the allowance paid to supervisors of pre-registration trainees has increased to £3,409. Claims from trainers taking on pre-registration trainees on or after 1 April 2014 should be paid at this new rate.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Busby  
Head of Ophthalmic Services

## Annex A

### **General Ophthalmic Services - payments for continuing education and training**

The Department of Health has agreed with the optical profession and the British Medical Association that a payment should be made in respect of loss of earnings associated with continuing education and training.

#### **The payment**

The payment in respect of CET undertaken between 1 January to 31 December 2013 is £529 and will be payable in 2014. The payment is due in respect of -

(a) optometrists; and

(b) ophthalmic medical practitioners, who conduct only sight tests and have no other remunerated medical employment (such as hospital work or general practice),

who were on the ophthalmic performers list for at least six months between 1 January to 31 December 2013 and have maintained their professional registration. The payment is for having undertaken appropriate continuing education and training.

**Claims must be made in writing to the appropriate Area Team** (or where the Area Team uses a support agency to the agency) and be made by contractors whether the contractor is claiming for him/herself or for a performer.

For contractors on a Performers List who are claiming a payment in respect of CET they personally have undertaken, the claim should be made to an Area Team (or support agency) in whose area they have a contract and with which they undertake the most work (if they have contracts with more than one Area Team).

When contractors claim for a performer, the claim should normally be made by and paid to the contractor for whom the performer works. Where a performer is employed by two or more contractors, the CET allowance should be claimed by and paid to the contractor whom the performer nominates for the purpose of payment of the CET allowance. The contractor shall make the claim to the Area Team which manages that performer's Performers' List arrangements.

A separate claim shall be made for each performer in respect of whom an allowance is payable and only one claim shall be made for each performer.

Payments must be made to contractors. Arrangements for payments to individual performers are a matter for agreement between contractors and performers and not a matter for the NHS. In cases where the contractor has provided or made available to the performer in paid time, or under an alternative arrangement agreed between them, sufficient CET to enable the performer to meet the statutory requirements for compulsory CET (in the case of an optometrist subject to the requirements of the GOC) then the payment may be retained by the contractor. However if the contractor

has not provided or made available to the practitioner sufficient CET to enable them to meet the statutory requirements for compulsory CET, the payment is due to the performer.

For ophthalmic medical practitioners the payment may only be made to practitioners who have no other medical appointment i.e. who do no other remunerative work than the testing of sight.

A claim may only be paid in respect of somebody who has maintained their professional registration during 2013. Performers who are no longer registered or on the performers list at the time of making the claim, for example because of retirement, must produce evidence to show they were registered and on the performers list during the relevant period in support of their claim.

Performers are not required to produce direct evidence of undertaking CET as a compulsory part of the claim or pre-condition of payment as this is already a condition of continuing registration. However, Area Teams may conduct sample or selective checks if they deem it necessary to test the probity of NHS payments after they have been made.

The claim form may be downloaded by Area Teams for issue to contractors on their lists. Contractors or performers may also, if they wish, download the form for submission to their Area Teams.

There is a three-month period for making claims, which this year runs from 14 July to 14 November 2014.