

PCT Chief Executives
PCT Directors of Finance

18 July 2011

Gateway Reference: 16335

Dear Colleague,

General Ophthalmic Services – NHS sight test fee, payments for continuing education and training and pre-registration supervisors grant

Summary

1. I am writing to notify you of:
 - a) the NHS sight test fee and NHS domiciliary fees for 2011/12;
 - b) the arrangements for payments for loss of earnings in respect of continuing education and training undertaken by optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners on PCT lists and the level of payment in respect of 2010 CET which is payable this year; and
 - c) the pre-registration supervisors grant from 1 April 2011.

2. Please could you bring this information to the attention of all staff dealing with general ophthalmic services, optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners.

NHS sight test fee/NHS domiciliary fee

3. The NHS sight test fee and NHS domiciliary fees remains unchanged for 2011/12 and payments should continue to be made in accordance with the General Ophthalmic Services Contracts (Payments) Directions 2010, issued on 3 March 2010.

Payments for continuing education and training

4. 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 2010 is £491. Payments will be made retrospectively 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 2010. This year the period during which optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners may make their claims will be 1 August – 30 November 2011.

5. Payments this year should be made in accordance with The General Ophthalmic Services Contracts (Continuing Education and Training Allowance) Payment Directions 2011 and the attached guidance (Annex A).

6. A claim form is on the Department of Health website [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_128563] and may be downloaded for completion and submission to PCTs.

7. PCTs (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 advices rather than making a separate mailing.

Pre-registration supervisors grant

8. From 1 April 2011 the allowance paid to supervisors of pre-registration trainees has increased to £3,166. Claims from trainers taking on pre-registration trainees on or after 1 April 2011 should be paid at this new rate.

Yours Sincerely

Derek Busby
Eye Care Services
Commissioning Directorate

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 2010 is £491 and will be payable in 2011. 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 a PCT's performers list for at least six months in the relevant year and have maintained their professional registration. The payment is for having undertaken appropriate continuing education and training.

Claims

In previous years a number of claims have been incorrectly sent to the Department of Health. The Department of Health does not process claims. **Claims must be made in writing to the appropriate PCT** (or where the PCT 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 for themselves the claim should be made to a PCT (or support agency) where they have a contract and with which they undertake the most work (if they have contracts with more than one PCT).

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 PCT on whose performers list the performer is entered* (which may not be the area where the contractor is him/herself listed).

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

Payments must be made to contractors. Arrangements for payments to individual practitioners are a matter for agreement between contractors and practitioners and not a matter for the NHS. In cases where the contractor has

provided or made available to the practitioner in paid time, or under an alternative arrangement agreed between them, sufficient CET to enable the practitioner 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 practitioner.

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.

Practitioners are not required to produce direct evidence of undertaking CET as a compulsory part of the claim or pre-condition of payment. A claim may only be paid in respect of somebody who has maintained their professional registration. However, PCTs may conduct sample or selective checks if they deem it necessary to test the probity of NHS payments.

The claim form is available from the Department of Health website and may be downloaded by PCTs for issue to contractors on their lists. Contractors or performers may also, if they wish, download the form for submission to their PCTs.

There is a three-month period for making claims, which this year runs from 1 August to 30 November 2011.