

30 May 2007

PCT Chief Executives
PCT Directors of Finance
Optometrists and Ophthalmic Medical Practitioners on
PCT lists

11th Floor
New Kings Beam House,
22 Upper Ground
London SE1 9BW

Gateway Reference Number: 8301

Dear Colleague,

Subject: General Ophthalmic Services - payments for continuing education and training

Summary

1. I am writing to notify you of 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 2006 CET which is payable this year.
2. Please could you bring this information to the attention of all staff dealing with general ophthalmic services, optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners.
3. Please make payments for continuing education validly claimed between 1 June 2007 and 31 August 2007 to General Ophthalmic Services contractors.

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. The payment for 2006 is £436. Payments will be made retrospectively with claims made by optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners during a three month period. This year the period for optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners to make their claims will be 1 June – 31 August 2007.
5. The revised Statement of General Ophthalmic Services Remuneration is attached to this letter. The only change made is to the CET payment. Voucher values are unaffected and the values for 2007/8 were set out under my letter of 23 March 2007. A further revision of the Statement will be issued when the sight test fee for 2007/8 is confirmed.

Action

6. A claim form is on the Department of Health website at http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_075026 and may be downloaded for completion and submission to PCTs. A more detailed note on the payment is attached at Annex A.
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.

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 in the year to 31 December 2006 is £436 and will be payable in 2007. The payment is due to -

- (a) opticians, other than a corporate optician; 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 ophthalmic list, or assisted a contractor in the provision of General Ophthalmic Services, 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

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 an assistant. For contractors claiming a payment for themselves the claim should be made to a PCT (or support agency) where they are on the ophthalmic list and with which they undertake the most work (if they are listed with more than one PCT).

When contractors claim for an assistant, the claim should normally be made by and paid to the contractor whom the assistant assists. Where an assistant is employed by two or more contractors, the CET allowance should be claimed by and paid to the contractor, whom the assistant nominates for the purpose of payment of the CET allowance. The contractor shall make the claim to the PCT on whose supplementary list the assistant is entered (which may not be the area where the contractor is him/herself listed). The Determination provides the authorisation for PCTs to make payments in this instance to contractors who are not on their ophthalmic list.

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 assistants are a matter for agreement between contractors and assistants and not a matter for the NHS. In cases where the contractor has provided or made available to the assistant sufficient CET to enable the assistant 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 they did not the payment is due to the assistant.

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 at http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_075026 and may be downloaded by PCTs for issue to contractors on their lists. Contractors or assistants 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 June to 31 August 2007.