



Department  
of Health

Dental & Eye Care Services  
Legislation and Policy Unit  
Richmond House  
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Ann Blackmore  
Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee  
2 Woodbridge Street  
London  
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8 March 2017

Dear Ann,

### **GOS Fees 2017/18**

Thank you for your recent letter about the level of GOS fees for 2017/18 and performance of Capita.

I appreciate that you are disappointed by the decision to freeze both the NHS sight test fee and optical voucher values. This decision was taken in light of the unprecedented challenges facing the NHS and the need to find £22 billion in efficiency savings.

We recognise the greater role optical practices could play in delivering a wider range of services in the community, which may reduce pressure on hospital eye departments, reduce waiting times and make patient care pathways more accessible in the community. However, the responsibility for commissioning services, over and above the NHS sight test, rests with Clinical Commissioning Groups, who are able to commission eye care services from community optometrists where they consider them to be needed in their area.

In respect of Capita, NHS England acknowledge that some contractors have experienced difficulties with the delivery of some of Capita's primary care support services. NHS England and Capita have apologised for the inconvenience this has caused. NHS England takes the performance of this contract very seriously and continues to challenge and support Capita to satisfactorily deliver these services.

I understand you have raised the issue of compensation with NHS England and they have been considering how they may be able to support those affected. These are exceptional issues which fall outside the normal contracting process and therefore best resolved through your on-going dialogue with NHS England.

I am pleased that OFNC welcomed the increase on the continuing education and training grant and the pre-registration trainee supervisors grant. We appreciated your comments on the draft CET Directions which set out that the CET payments will be claimable between 1<sup>st</sup> July and 31<sup>st</sup> October.

We will now take steps to communicate the fees to the NHS via publishing a notice on the gov.uk website. I will ask Claire to notify you ahead of publication.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H Butt', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hamid Butt  
Head of Dental and Eye Care Finance