STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2026 No. 21

HEALTH AND PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES

The Optical Charges and Payments (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

Made - - - -	*19th February 2026*
Coming into operation -	*1st April 2026*

The Department of Health(**a**) makes the following Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by Articles 62, 98, 106 and 107(6) of, and Schedule 15 to, the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972(**b**), with the approval of the Department of Finance.

In accordance with Article 62(3) of that Order it has consulted with such organisations as appear to it to be representative of medical practitioners practising as ophthalmic medical practitioners and ophthalmic opticians.

Citation, commencement and interpretation

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Optical Charges and Payments (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 and shall come into operation on 1st April 2026.

(2) In these Regulations "the principal Regulations" means the Health and Personal Social Services (Optical Charges and Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997(**c**).

Amendment of regulation 19 of the principal Regulations

2.—(1) In regulation 19 of the principal Regulations (redemption value of voucher for replacement or repair)—

(a) in paragraph (1)(b) for "£65.08" substitute "£67.68"; and

(b) in paragraph (3) for "£16.83" substitute "£17.50".

(**a**) Formerly the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. See 2016 c.5 (N.I.), s1(5)

(**b**) S.I. 1972/1265 (N.I. 14) as amended by Articles 3 and 17 of, and Schedules 1 and 6 to, the Health and Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 (S.I. 1984/1158 (N.I. 8)); Article 14(2) of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 (S.I. 1998/594 (N.I. 1)); Article 8 of the Health and Medicines (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 (S.I. 1988/2249 (N.I. 24)); Article 34 of, and Part II of Schedule 5 to, the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 (S.I. 1991/194 (N.I. 1)), there are other amendments which are not relevant

(**c**) S.R. 1997 No. 191: relevant amending Regulations are S.R. 1998 No. 86; S.R. 1999 Nos. 111 and 394, S.R. 2000 No. 51, S.R. 2001 No. 133, S.R. 2002 No. 85, S.R. 2003 Nos. 176 and 424, S.R. 2004 Nos. 92, 113, 162 and 188, S.R. 2005 No. 71, S.R. 2006 No. 106, S.R. 2007 No. 141, S.R. 2008 No. 128, 2009 c. 1, S.R. 2009 No. 153, S.R. 2012 No. 259, S.R. 2013 No. 204, S.R. 2014 No.154, S.R. 2015 No. 266, S.R. 2016 No. 335, S.R. 2018 No. 211, S.R. 2023 No. 40, S.R. 2024 No. 127 and S.R. 2025 No. 46

Amendments of the Schedules to the principal Regulations

3.—(1) In Schedule 1 to the principal Regulations (voucher letter codes and face values – supply and replacement)(**a**), in column 3 (face value of voucher), for each amount specified in column 1 of the Table below (old amount) substitute the amount specified in relation to it in column 2 of that Table (new amount).

Table

Column 1 *Old Amount*	*Column 2* *New Amount*
£44.63	£46.42
£67.68	£70.39
£99.21	£103.18
£223.71	£232.66
£77.05	£80.13
£97.73	£101.64
£126.88	£131.96
£245.97	£255.81
£229.13	£238.30

(2) In Schedule 2(**b**) to the principal Regulations (prisms, tints, photochromic lenses, small and special glasses and complex appliances)—

(a) in paragraph 1(1)(a) (prism – single vision lens) for "£14.35" substitute "£14.92";

(b) in paragraph 1(1)(b) (prism – other lens) for "£17.63" substitute "£18.34";

(c) in paragraph 1(1)(c) (single vision tinted lens) for "£5.09" substitute "£5.29";

(d) in paragraph 1(1)(d) (other tinted lens) for "£5.65" substitute "£5.88";

(e) in paragraph 1(1)(e) (small glasses)—

(i) in sub-head (i) for "£73.21" substitute "£76.14";

(ii) in sub-head (ii) for "£65.08" substitute "£67.68";

(iii) in sub-head (iii) for "£35.14" substitute "£36.55";

(f) for paragraph 1(1)(g) (specially manufactured frames)—

(i) in sub-head (i) for "£73.27" substitute "£76.20";

(ii) in sub-head (ii) for "£65.02" substitute "£67.62";

(iii) in sub-head (iii) for "£35.14" substitute "£36.55";

(g) in paragraph 2(a) (minimum complex appliance payment — single vision lenses) for "£16.61" substitute "£17.27"; and

(h) in paragraph 2(b) (minimum complex appliance payment — other cases) for "£42.71" substitute "£44.42".

(3) For Schedule 3 to the principal Regulations (voucher value repair)(**c**), substitute the Schedule 3 as set out in the Schedule to these Regulations.

Application of Regulations 2 and 3

4. The amendments made in regulations 2 and 3 apply only in relation to a voucher accepted or used pursuant to regulation 12 or regulation 17 of the principal Regulations on or after 1 April 2026.

(**a**) Schedule 1 was substituted by the Schedule to S.R. 1999 No. 111, and last amended by regulation 3(1) of S.R. 2025 No. 46
(**b**) Schedule 2 was last amended by regulation 3(2) of S.R. 2025 No. 46
(**c**) Schedule 3 was substituted by regulation 3(3) of, and the Schedule to, S.R. 2025 No. 46

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Health on 19th February 2026



Gearoid Cassidy
A senior officer of the Department of Health

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Finance on 19th February 2026



Patrick Neeson
A senior officer of the Department of Finance

SCHEDULE

Regulation 3(3)

SCHEDULE 3 TO THE PRINCIPAL REGULATIONS AS SUBSTITUTED BY THESE REGULATIONS

"SCHEDULE 3

REGULATION 19(2) AND (3)

VOUCHER VALUE REPAIR

	Letter Codes - Values								
Nature of repair	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Repair or replacement of one lens	£14.46	£26.44	£42.78	£107.52	£31.25	£42.02	£57.22	£119.09	£110.40
Repair or replacement of two lenses	£28.85	£52.81	£85.55	£215.03	£62.51	£84.01	£114.40	£238.18	£220.73
Repair or replacement of:									
the front of a frame	£14.81	£14.81	£14.81	£14.81	£14.81	£14.81	£14.81	£14.81	£14.81
a side of a frame	£8.69	£8.69	£8.69	£8.69	£8.69	£8.69	£8.69	£8.69	£8.69
the whole frame	£17.58	£17.58	£17.58	£17.58	£17.58	£17.58	£17.58	£17.58	£17.58

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations further amend the Health and Personal Social Services (Optical Charges and Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 ("the principal Regulations") which provide for payment to be made, by means of a voucher system, in respect of costs incurred by certain categories of persons in connection with the supply, replacement and repair of optical appliances.

Regulation 2 amends regulation 19 of the principal Regulations to increase the redemption value of a voucher issued towards the cost of replacement of a single contact lens and to increase the maximum contribution by way of a voucher to the cost of repair of a frame.

Regulation 3 and the Schedule amend Schedules 1, 2 and 3 to the principal Regulations. Firstly, the value of vouchers issued towards the costs of supply and replacement of glasses and contact lenses and of vouchers for glasses where the frame needs to be specially manufactured is increased; secondly, the additional values for vouchers for prisms, tints, photochromic lenses and special categories of appliances are increased; and thirdly, the value of vouchers issued towards the cost of repair and replacement of optical appliances is increased.

Regulation 4 provides that the increases contained in regulation 2 and 3 apply only in relation to vouchers accepted or used on or after 1st April 2026.

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£6.40

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/nisr/2026/21

ISBN 978-0-33-802582-1

