

# OFNC

Association of British Dispensing Opticians  
Association of Optometrists  
British Medical Association  
Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians

## Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee

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Chair: Stuart Burdett

Secretary: Tony Stafford

### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### OPTICS OUT IN THE COLD AS GOVERNMENT FREEZES GOS FEES AGAIN

The Government has announced that GOS fees in England will be frozen for a fourth successive year, because of “the continuing tight economic climate facing the NHS”. Voucher values will also be frozen, meaning that NHS patients will lose out directly. CET fees and pre-registration grants will rise by 2%, compared to last year’s 1% uplift.

The OFNC has left the Department of Health and Social Care in no doubt that contractors will be angered by Ministers’ decision, especially in the light of the Government’s statements about the end of austerity and lifting the cap on NHS pay, and the recent announcements of extra funding for the NHS in England, particularly for primary care. The OFNC had bid for a 3% increase in GOS fees for mandatory services and 4% in additional services this year.

Stuart Burdett, OFNC Chair, said:

“There is no fair way this further freeze can be justified. The costs of providing NHS care have increased every bit as fast in optics as in other areas. This set-back will further convince hard-working front-line clinicians that Ministers in England simply don’t value the vital services we provide to NHS patients.”

The OFNC made a very strong case for a reasonable increase in GOS fees this year, based on the efficiencies optical contractors continue to deliver to the NHS, the rising costs they face, and the extra money going into the NHS in England. We also argued for a significant rise in voucher values, an important patient benefit which is also suffering another real-terms cut.

OFNC has informed the Government that it cannot accept this unreasonable offer and that without an improved offer, a negotiated settlement is once again not possible.

It is likely that fees will once again have to be imposed in 2019/20.

### **Notes for editors:**

1. The Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee (OFNC) is the community eye health equivalent of the British Medical Association (BMA) and British Dental Association (BDA) General Practice Committees and community pharmacists' Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC). It is the recognised negotiating body for fees for the professions. Its members include the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO), the Association of Optometrists (AOP), the BMA, and the Federation of Opticians (FODO). The Chair and secretariat of the OFNC are provided on an alternating basis by the AOP and FODO.
2. Stuart Burdett became Chair of the OFNC in January 2019, replacing Trevor Warburton. The current membership of the OFNC is: Stuart Burdett (FODO – Chair of OFNC); Henrietta Alderman (CEO, AOP); Peter Hampson (AOP); Gordon Ilett (AOP); Tushar Majithia (AOP); David Hewlett (CEO, FODO); Alan Tinger (FODO); Richard Edwards (FODO); Sir Anthony Garrett (CEO, ABDO); Simon Longstaff (BMA); Professor Nagasubramanian (BMA); Tom Andrews (BMA). Secretary: Tony Stafford (AOP). Observers: Mike Fegan (Chair, LOCSU); Richard Whittington (COO, LOCSU).
3. Papers relating to the fee negotiations, including the OFNC's bid to NHS England, have been published at <http://www.opticalconfederation.org.uk/resources/ofnc>
4. For further information please contact the OFNC secretary, Tony Stafford, at [tonystafford@aop.org.uk](mailto:tonystafford@aop.org.uk) or 020 7549 2059.