

Ed Scully and Ali Sparke
Primary Care
Department of Health & Social Care
3rd Floor 39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

27th November 2025

Dear Ed and Ali

We acknowledge your letter of 21 November setting out changes to GOS fees and associated payments for 2025/26 and the first two sets of underpinning directions.

You will appreciate that these are below inflation, do not address contractor concerns about underfunding, fall below the final awards made to other parts of primary care and leave primary eye care even further behind. It is almost as if NHS England and DHSC remain content to punish success while continuing to reward failure. We had understood this was something the government was determined to tackle but these fees and the grants show clearly either that is not the case or that the message has not filtered down to NHS England.

These fees and payments also run counter to the recommendations of the Darzi review and 10 Year Health Plan and put primary eye care providers at the back end of the primary care queue, despite experiencing the same cost pressure as all other sectors and despite the acknowledged sound evidence we have provided. GOS contractors will reach their own views about the value of government promises and their loyalty to the NHS.

Clearly OFNC is unable to accept these fees and payments on behalf of the sector. Given the issues we all had with NHS data, and notwithstanding the final slight flexibility NHS England allowed which is acknowledged, the government will have to impose these changes and non-changes on a profession which will be mighty angry and extremely disappointed in the government.

Looking ahead to 2026/27, we would ask that, unlike this year, you start by looking again, with us, at costs and trends, ideally using more reliable data, before you make recommendations to Ministers about the proportion of NHS funding allocated to primary eye care. As always OFNC is happy to work with DHSC and NHS England on this and would suggest bringing your health economist into the process so that we can discuss the evidence on a more robust basis.

Yours sincerely

Paul Carroll
Chair OFNC