

To: • Paul Carroll
Chair of OFNC

cc. • Peter Hampson
Secretary OFNC

NHS England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8UG

19 March 2025

Dear Paul

RE: Optical fee discussion 2025/2026, including revisions to the trainer grant

Following finalisation of budgets, NHS England is now able to confirm the funding available for optical fees uplifts in 2025/26. We would like to engage with OFNC on potential distribution options. We recognise that this engagement is later in the financial year than usual so would like to confirm that any revisions to GOS fees will be backdated to 1 April 2025.

To help facilitate this engagement we can confirm that any uplift will need to be within a financial envelope that is driven by the GDP deflator of 2.39%. A ministerial decision has already been taken to freeze NHS optical vouchers for 25/26. Therefore, the available financial envelope will be for distribution across the remaining GOS fees. We see the discussion focusing on:

- How we ensure that distribution of this uplift best balances the needs of contractors, and
- How we amend the trainers' grant to reflect the changes to undergraduate training.

We recognise that historically OFNC have undertaken a comprehensive exercise to present evidence to NHSE and DHSC prior to us advising on affordability. For 2025/26 our working budget has now been determined following the spending review, and so our intention is to work with you on a more focused engagement to understand your perspective on the potential distribution options for the available budget. We recognise that structuring the engagement in this way is different to the approach we've taken previously, but we hope it

will be less burdensome and allow us to be clearer with you up front on the trade-offs and decisions we will need to take.

We would like to propose that we schedule a series of meetings starting in the week commencing 24th March 2025, to discuss these issues. Once these discussions are concluded NHS England will write to DHSC with our recommendations, on which you will also be sighted. DHSC will then seek a decision from Ministers and subsequently consult with the OFNC on any necessary legislative amendments.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ali Sparke', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Ali Sparke
Director for Dentistry, Community Pharmacy and Optometry

Appendix A

Allocation for sight testing in SES 25/26

Region	ICB	Allocation for sight testing in SES 25/26 £000s
East of England	Mid And South Essex ICB	217
East of England	Bedfordshire, Luton And Milton Keynes ICB	209
East of England	Suffolk And North East Essex ICB	165
East of England	Hertfordshire And West Essex ICB	265
East of England	Norfolk And Waveney ICB	221
East of England	Cambridgeshire And Peterborough ICB	204
London	South East London ICB	420
London	North East London ICB	310
London	North Central London ICB	266
London	North West London ICB	546
London	South West London ICB	381
Midlands	Herefordshire And Worcestershire ICB	182
Midlands	Birmingham And Solihull ICB	445
Midlands	Derby And Derbyshire ICB	178
Midlands	Lincolnshire ICB	155
Midlands	Leicester, Leicestershire And Rutland ICB	257
Midlands	Staffordshire And Stoke On Trent ICB	346
Midlands	Shropshire, Telford And Wrekin ICB	124
Midlands	Northamptonshire ICB	177
Midlands	Nottingham And Nottinghamshire ICB	157
Midlands	Black Country ICB	256
Midlands	Coventry And Warwickshire ICB	201
North East and Yorkshire	South Yorkshire ICB	287
North East and Yorkshire	North East And North Cumbria ICB	751
North East and Yorkshire	Humber And North Yorkshire ICB	282
North East and Yorkshire	West Yorkshire ICB	473
North West	Lancashire And South Cumbria ICB	418
North West	Greater Manchester Integrated Care ICB	730
North West	Cheshire And Merseyside ICB	641
South East	Kent And Medway ICB	653
South East	Frimley Integrated Care ICB	159
South East	Sussex ICB	396
South East	Hampshire And The Isle Of Wight ICB	399
South East	Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire And Berkshire West ICB	378
South East	Surrey Heartlands ICB	296
South West	Devon ICB	301
South West	Bath And North East Somerset, Swindon And Wiltshire ICB	177
South West	Gloucestershire ICB	146

South West	Somerset ICB	135
South West	Cornwall And The Isles Of Scilly ICB	49
South West	Bristol, North Somerset And South Gloucestershire ICB	160
South West	Dorset ICB	187

Appendix B

Allocation for dental checks in SES 25/26

Region	ICB	ICB Code	Allocation for dental checks in SES 25/26 £000s
East of England	Mid And South Essex ICB	QH8	64
East of England	Bedfordshire, Luton And Milton Keynes ICB	QHG	0
East of England	Suffolk And North East Essex ICB	QJG	110
East of England	Hertfordshire And West Essex ICB	QM7	91
East of England	Norfolk And Waveney ICB	QMM	147
East of England	Cambridgeshire And Peterborough ICB	QUE	36
London	South East London ICB	QKK	45
London	North East London ICB	QMF	1
London	North Central London ICB	QMJ	15
London	North West London ICB	QRV	20
London	South West London ICB	QWE	48
Midlands	Herefordshire And Worcestershire ICB	QGH	95
Midlands	Birmingham And Solihull ICB	QHL	75
Midlands	Derby And Derbyshire ICB	QJ2	112
Midlands	Lincolnshire ICB	QJM	28
Midlands	Leicester, Leicestershire And Rutland ICB	QK1	76
Midlands	Staffordshire And Stoke On Trent ICB	QNC	162
Midlands	Shropshire, Telford And Wrekin ICB	QOC	14
Midlands	Northamptonshire ICB	QPM	8
Midlands	Nottingham And Nottinghamshire ICB	QT1	22
Midlands	Black Country ICB	QUA	0
Midlands	Coventry And Warwickshire ICB	QWU	1
North East and Yorkshire	South Yorkshire ICB	QF7	63
North East and Yorkshire	North East And North Cumbria ICB	QHM	108
North East and Yorkshire	Humber And North Yorkshire ICB	QOQ	110
North East and Yorkshire	West Yorkshire ICB	QWO	39
North West	Lancashire And South Cumbria ICB	QE1	132
North West	Greater Manchester Integrated Care ICB	QOP	10
North West	Cheshire And Merseyside ICB	QYG	205
South East	Kent And Medway ICB	QKS	178
South East	Frimley Integrated Care ICB	QNQ	100
South East	Sussex ICB	QNX	165
South East	Hampshire And The Isle Of Wight ICB	QRL	109
South East	Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire And Berkshire West ICB	QU9	158
South East	Surrey Heartlands ICB	QXU	152
South West	Devon ICB	QJK	53
South West	Bath And North East Somerset, Swindon And Wiltshire ICB	QOX	131

South West	Gloucestershire ICB	QR1	24
South West	Somerset ICB	QSL	32
South West	Cornwall And The Isles Of Scilly ICB	QT6	33
South West	Bristol, North Somerset And South Gloucestershire ICB	QUY	12
South West	Dorset ICB	QVV	18