



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Pharmacy & Eye Care Services
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Paul Carroll
Chair
Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee (OFNC)
2 Woodbridge Street
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22nd October 2025

Dear Paul,

General Ophthalmic Services fees 2025/26

I am writing to you to set out the outcome of the independent review of OFNC's and NHSE's data modelling.

This was undertaken following disagreement between NHSE and OFNC on the data underpinning the assumptions made to inform 2025/26 uplifts.

Detail of the review, including modelling and method, are included in Annex A.

NHSE will write to you shortly to set out the next steps in terms of concluding fee discussions.

Yours sincerely,

Alette Addison
Deputy Director – Pharmacy and Eye Care Services

Annex A

Low and High Growth Scenarios

The assumptions made for low and high growth set out by NHSE were considered an appropriate method for modelling future demand across eye care services. One minor amendment made was to include 2019-20 activity in the pre-pandemic trend scenarios as it is unlikely that there would have been any impact on activity that year as a result of the pandemic. This resulted in a decrease in the low growth scenario for sight tests from 0.97% to 0.92%, and an increase for vouchers from 3% to 3.7%.

The low and high growth assumptions set out by OFNC for vouchers (0.34% and 0.43%) were considered, however given they are significantly lower than average growth seen for GOS3s it was decided that the risk of over-delivery using these assumptions was too high.

The table below sets out the low and high growth scenarios used for modelling.

GOS Line	Low Growth Scenario	High Growth Scenario
GOS1: High-street sight tests	0.92% Pre-pandemic annual growth trend in high-street sight tests	1.27% Forecast ONS population growth
GOS6: Domiciliary sight tests		
GOS5: Part-funded private sight tests		
GOS3: Optical vouchers and supplements	1.27% Forecast ONS population growth	3.7% Pre-pandemic annual growth trend in GOS3 vouchers ¹
GOS4: Repairs and replacements vouchers		

Modelling Approach

The modelling approach varies given data availability and quality between the GOS lines. An explanation of the method we have used is set out below for each GOS line.

GOS1: High-street sight tests

Ledger spend for 24/25 and the sight test fee of £23.53 were used to ascertain the total number of high-street sight tests (GOS1s) in 24/25. The growth rates for the low and high scenarios were then applied to the 24/25 activity to forecast potential activity for 25/26.

GOS3: Optical vouchers and supplements

Ledger spend for GOS3 was reported as a total for the line, however GOS3 vouchers have various fees depending on the voucher or supplement issued and so actual activity could not be readily determined.

Activity data (eOPS) for 24/25 was used to estimate the proportion of activity that fell within each voucher type or supplement within GOS3. This was consistent through recent years and so was judged to be a fair estimate. Given there were different fees for each voucher these proportions had to be fee-weighted to ensure that when the proportions were applied

¹ Pre-pandemic trend for GOS4 vouchers is similar to GOS3s therefore the assumptions has been made that growth will be the same for both GOS3 and GOS4

to 24/25 ledger spend they accounted for the full fee structure across GOS3. The fee weighted proportions for 24/25 can be seen below:

Voucher	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	CAP single	CAP bifocal	Prisms	Tint	SFS
24/25 fee-weighted proportions	69%	18%	1%	2%	7%	2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	0.1%	0.2%

These proportions were used with the 24/25 ledger spend to estimate actual activity for 24/25. The growth rates for the high and low scenarios were then applied to the estimated activity to forecast future GOS3 demand.

GOS4: Repairs and replacement vouchers & GOS5: Part-funded private sight tests

Due to limited data availability, it was not possible to determine an accurate activity or average cost per unit for both GOS4 and GOS5 vouchers. Given there was more confidence in the ledger spend data, for GOS4 and GOS5 lines, the low and high growth rates were applied to the 24/25 spend rather than estimated activity.

GOS6: Domiciliary sight tests Activity data (eOPS) was used to estimate the split between the higher GOS6 fee and lower GOS6 fee spend for 2024/25 as the ledger data gave an aggregated figure for GOS6 spend. The activity data suggested a split where 84% of spend was on the higher fee GOS6 activity and 16% was on the lower fee activity. These fee-weighted proportions were then applied to the 24/25 ledger spend to estimate activity for 24/25. The growth assumptions for the high and low scenarios were then applied to the fee-weighted estimated activity to model future demand for GOS6s.

Pre-registration training grants and CPD payment

Pre-registration training grants spend was based on the estimated number of students that would be eligible for the grant in 25/26. Data from the College set out that there were 977 students in 24/25 across the UK, of those 828 placements (85%) were in England and so were eligible for the grant (including students coming from Wales, Scotland and NI). The College said there would be a maximum increase in new students across the UK of 50-100, which was equivalent to 42-85 students increase in placements in England assuming the 85% of current eligible students continues. For 25/26 it has been modelled that between 870-913 students will meet the eligibility for the pre-registration grant. The modelling has assumed that 100% of students would make a full claim. This may appear an over estimate but it builds in a buffer for late claims. Currently there is no time-limit on when these grants can be claimed, meaning there are a number of late claims each year, averaging around £865k (equivalent to 216 full claims, which is almost 25% of current eligible students). As you know to ensure better planning in the future there is an intention during 25/26, to ensure that any outstanding claims are paid.

There was limited data available to model future spend for CPD, therefore growth rates for each scenario have been applied to 24/25 spend.

Results

The table below sets out the potential pressures on the total envelope NHSE have set based on our modelled low and high scenarios for each proposed sight test fee. All scenarios show an over-delivery compared to available envelope except for the low scenario with a sight test fee of £24.09. This scenario assumes a 1.27% growth in vouchers which is relatively low compared to the average growth trend and so this scenario is unlikely.

	GOS1 Fee	Comparison to Envelope (£m)	
		Low Estimate	High Estimate
NHSE - GDP deflator	£24.09	2.0	-5.8
OFNC	£24.40	-2.4	-10.2
NHSE - £1 increase	£24.53	-4.1	-12
NHSE - £25	£25.00	-10.9	-18.7