



Dear Colleague

## GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION OF EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE
2. REVISED FORMS GOS(S)3 AND 4

### Summary

1. This letter advises of changes in entitlement to vouchers towards the cost of glasses/contact lenses as a result of the introduction of income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA(IR)).

### Action

2. NHS Boards and Practitioner Services are asked to note the contents of the Memorandum to this letter.
3. Forms GOS(S)3 and 4 are being revised to reflect the new ESA(IR). Supplies of the revised forms, which can be identified by the revision 10/08, will be issued to NHS Boards in due course for onward distribution to optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners by 20 October 2008. The current versions of the GOS(S)3 and 4 should not be used after 27 October and stocks should be destroyed as soon as possible after that date.
3. Copies of the Memorandum to this letter are being sent under separate cover for **urgent** distribution to all optometrist and ophthalmic medical practitioners on NHS Board lists.

Yours sincerely

DR JONATHAN PRYCE  
Deputy Director

8 October 2008

### Addresses

For action  
Chief Executives, NHS Boards

Director, Practitioner Services

For information  
Chief Executive,  
NHS National Services Scotland

### Enquiries to:

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**NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE  
GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES**

**1. INTRODUCTION OF EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE  
2. REVISED FORMS GOS(S)3 AND 4**

1. This Memorandum advises of changes in entitlement to vouchers towards the cost of glasses/contact lenses as a result of the introduction of income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA(IR)) from 27 October 2008.

**Employment and Support Allowance**

2. Currently, a number of people who are incapable of work receive Income Support which gives them and their families' entitlement to a voucher towards the cost of glasses/contact lenses. Some who are incapable of work receive Incapacity Benefit alone which does not automatically entitle them to a voucher but they may seek help through the NHS Low Income Scheme. From 27 October 2008 ESA will be introduced and will replace Incapacity Benefit and Income Support based on incapacity or disability.

3. ESA will consist of an income related and a contributory element. For new claimants Income Support will be replaced by ESA(IR) and Incapacity Benefit will be replaced by contributory ESA. Only those in receipt of income related ESA will be automatically entitled to a voucher towards the cost of glasses/contact lenses.

4. Existing claimants will be migrated to ESA over time to bring all claimants under the one regime. In the meantime these patients will continue to be entitled to a voucher towards the cost of glasses/contact lenses on the basis of being in receipt of Income Support.

5. Regulation 8 (Eligibility – supply of optical appliances) is being amended to provide for the introduction of income related ESA. Copies of NHS (Optical Charges and Payments) (Scotland) Amendment (No 2) Regulations 2008 will be available at NHS Board offices for inspection in due course.

**Revised Forms GOS(S)3 and 4**

6. Forms GOS(S)3 and 4 are being revised to reflect the new ESA(IR). Supplies of the revised forms, which can be identified by the revision 10/08, will be issued by NHS Boards in due course. The current versions of the GOS(S)3 and 4 should not be used after 27 October and stocks should be destroyed as soon as possible after that date.

## Enquiries

7. Any enquiries arising from this Memorandum should be taken up with your NHS Board.

Scottish Government Health Directorates  
8 October 2008