

PRIMARY CARE DIRECTORATE



To: All NI Ophthalmic Practitioners

BY EMAIL

Primary Care Directorate
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

Email:
gdoscorrespondence@health-ni.gov.uk

Date: 06 November 2025

Dear Colleague,

ALLOCATION OF THE £1 MILLION CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL INSURANCE PAYMENTS

I am writing to provide an update regarding the allocation of funding to ophthalmic practices to help mitigate against the increased cost of National Insurance Contributions (NIC).

On 13 May 2025, Minister Nesbitt announced a £1 million investment in General Ophthalmic Services to support employers and ophthalmic practices with the increased cost of National Insurance contributions.

The intention is to allocate this funding at practice level, proportionate to the number of sight tests carried out annually by each practice, with payments issued biannually, each covering a 6-month period.

There will be no need to apply for the NIC payments. Qualification will be automatic, provided practices submit accurate information to BSO on a monthly basis.

As the money is being paid at a practice level it will not be superannuable and will not contribute to other payments or allowances such as maternity and long-term sickness payments.

This allocation method is being piloted for 2025/26 and, should it be deemed successful, the intention to is continue to allocate funding using the same methodology in future years.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LThompson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Leanne Thompson
Head of General Dental & Ophthalmic Services

Cc: Raymond Curran, Head of Ophthalmic Services (SPPG)