



Ophthalmic Services

General Ophthalmic Services Memorandum

06 January 2026

**To all Optometrists and
Ophthalmic Medical Practitioners
providing General Ophthalmic Services**

Dear Practitioner

General Ophthalmic Services Payments for Continuing Education and Training (CET)

1. The Department of Health (DoH) (NI) has agreed with the optical and medical professions that a payment for 2025 in respect of costs associated with undertaking Continuing Education and Training will be **£697**.

The Payment

2. The payment is due to:

- Optometrists; and
- Ophthalmic Medical Practitioners (OMPs)

who have provided General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) in Northern Ireland for at least six months in the relevant year, i.e. 2025, have maintained their professional registration, undertaken the appropriate Continuing Education and Training during the relevant year and makes the claim for a CET allowance in writing on the form approved for this purpose by the Business Services Organisation (BSO). Please refer to the FAQs at the end of this MOS for further guidance.

3. Payments are made via BACS, **if this is your first time claiming the grant or if you have changed your bank details since the last grant was paid, please also complete the accompanying BACS form and return this to BSO.**

Providing Support to Health and Social Care

Ophthalmic Services, 2 Franklin St, Belfast, BT2 8DQ
☎ (028) 9536 3753 / Email: ophthalmic.payments@hscni.net





4. **Claims must be made to the BSO, sent for the attention of Gareth Drake, by individual Optometrists/OMPs, using claim form GOS(NI)CET either:**

a) **by Post** “CET Claim” should be written on the envelope and it should only contain the CET claim and BACS form (if required). Proof of postage should be retained as evidence.

Or

b) **by email**; entitled “CET Claim” to Ophthalmic.Payments@hscni.net

Important note: All posted CET claims must be followed up with BSO by the practitioner within 3 weeks of submission of the claim to BSO, to ensure the claim has been received.

5. Payments will be made to individual practitioners who are enrolled for the provision of GOS in NI. Where a practice owner has provided or made available to practitioners sufficient CET to enable them to meet the statutory requirements for compulsory CET, then the payment may be passed by the practitioner to the practice owner. These individual arrangements are a matter for agreement between the practice owner and the practitioner and not for the BSO or DoH (NI). Only one claim may be made for each practitioner.
6. Practitioners are not required to produce direct evidence of undertaking CET as a compulsory part of the claim or pre-condition of payment. However, the BSO, Health and Social Care Strategic Planning & Performance Group and the DoH (NI) may conduct sample or selective checks, if they deem it necessary, to test the probity of Health Service payments. A claim may only be paid in respect of an Optometrist/OMP who has maintained their professional registration.
7. The claim form GOS(NI)CET is available from the BSO and also available via the BSO website [here](#).
8. **Claims must be made during the period from 6th January 2026 - 13th March 2026 inclusive.**

Please note late claims CANNOT be paid.



FAQs regarding eligibility for the CET grant

1. What is meant by provision of General Ophthalmic Services (GOS)?

GOS is the provision of Health Service funded sight tests only, as described in the GOS NI regulations. All other related health service funded activities i.e. supply of glasses involving a voucher, or repairs and replacement, do not fall within “provision of GOS”.

Only practitioners who have carried out GOS sight tests in Northern Ireland during at least 6 months of the year in question are eligible to apply for the CET grant.

2. Am I eligible to apply if I only qualified in August?

No, as you will only have provided GOS sight tests for 5 months and the regulations state provision must be for at least 6 months.

3. I have been off work ill for part of the year, may I apply?

Any practitioner who does not meet the eligibility criteria due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control should submit an explanation of their particular circumstances. Such a situation will be considered on an individual case by case basis by SPPG.

4. I didn't receive my grant and was informed by BSO that my application wasn't received?

As stated in the MOS it is the individual practitioner's responsibility to check directly with BSO, within 3 weeks of submitting the application, that their application has been received for payment.

Any enquiries arising from this memorandum should be directed to

Gareth Drake, Ophthalmic Services, BSO via email:-

ophthalmic.payments@hscni.net

