



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Príomhoifigeach ECSP Ceantar 8
Baile Átha Cliath & Lár Laighin
Oifig an Cheantair
Bóthar an Ardáin
An Tulach Mhór
Co Uíbh Fhailí

Chief Officer CHO Area 8
HSE Area Office,
Arden Road
Tullamore
Co. Offaly

PRÍOMHOIFIGEACH ECSP CEANTAR 8
COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE ORGANISATION

t: 057 93 59787
f: 057 93 15855
e: CHO8@hse.ie

t: 057 93 59787
f: 057 93 15855
e: CHO8@hse.ie

10th July, 2019

Deputy Shane Cassells
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

RE PQ 23399/19: To ask the Minister for Health if the amount awarded through the HSE optical voucher differs for children in County Meath compared to other counties; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cassells,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question and Representation, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and outline the position as follows.

The Health Act, 1970 makes provision for ophthalmic services to children as follows:

1. All children up to the age of 6 years (Section 66 (1))
2. Children attending a National Primary School or another school to which Section 66 (3) of the Health Act, 1970 has been applied (Section 66 (2))
3. Children who have had defects noticed at a child health or school health examination (Section 67 (2))
4. Children aged 12-16 years who are medical card holders in their own right or are dependants of medical card holders (Section 45 (1)(b) and Section 67 (1))
5. Children who hold long term illness cards in relation to eye/sight defects associated with the condition for which they hold the long term illness card (Section 56 (3))
6. Children who are referred to out-patient hospital departments for non-routine examination/ treatment following routine examination (Section 56 (2))

Provision of Service:

- Eye examinations are provided through the HSE Community Ophthalmic Services to children under 12 years or until completion of primary examination. Under certain circumstances the HSE may engage contracted optometrists to provide this service.
- Routine eye examinations may be provided to children aged 12 to 16 years who are dependants of medical card holders or who are medical card holders in their own right. These examinations may be provided directly by the HSE, or, in certain circumstances to enhance service capacity, the HSE may authorise the provision of service by contracted ophthalmologists, optometrists or opticians.

Dispensing:

1. All children up to the age of 6 years (Section 66 (1))
2. Children attending a National Primary School or another school to which Section 66 (3) of the Health Act, 1970 has been applied (Section 66 (2))

3. Children who have had defects noticed at a child health or school health examination (Section 67 (2))

Children in the above categories are entitled, if required, to the supply of one pair of contract spectacles every two years from the date of initial prescription or change of prescription. In the case of breakages or loss, a maximum of two additional pairs of spectacles may be provided within 12 months from the date of initial prescription or date of last prescription change.


1. Children aged 12-16 years who are medical card holders in their own right or are dependants of medical card holders (Section 45 (1)(b) and Section 67 (1))
2. Children who hold long term illness cards in relation to eye/sight defects associated with the condition for which they hold the long term illness card (Section 56 (3))

This group of children are entitled to free eye examination and spectacles every two years, if required. In the case of loss or damage, one additional pair of spectacles may be provided free of charge in a 12 month period. Occasional requests to fund high prescription lenses issued by the Dublin children's hospitals or from the Eye & Ear Hospital or further replacements, on the basis of assessed clinical need, are considered within allocated budgets on a case by case basis across each county

All counties in CHO Area 8 apply the amounts payable in line with the National Scale of Optical Fees which are issued nationally by the Primary Care Reimbursement Scheme. A copy of the Scale of Fees payable under the HSE Community Ophthalmic Services Scheme is attached for your information.

I trust the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,



Pat Bennett
Chief Officer
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation