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30th November 2020

**Deputy Emer Higgins,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

PQ 38224/20 - To ask the Minister for Health if children under 12 years of age are entitled to an eye examination and voucher to cover the cost of glasses; and if so how often

-Emer Higgins

Dear Deputy Higgins,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

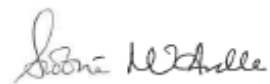
Ophthalmology is one of a range of multi-disciplinary services provided through Primary Care in Community Healthcare Organisations. Eye care in Ireland encompasses a range of services including HSE directly provided services and contracted primary care services. HSE directly provided services includes vision surveillance and screening at birth, preschool and primary school in addition to assessment, diagnosis and treatment of visual impairment and other ocular pathologies in adults and children. The latter services are provided by Primary Eye Care/Ophthalmology teams comprised of a number of eye care specialists.

Children receive a vision screen while in national school from a Public Health Nurse. If an abnormality is detected on screening, the child will be referred to the Community Ophthalmic Physician or the local multidisciplinary ophthalmic care team. If required the parent or guardian, will be given a prescription/authorisation which they should present to a contracted Optometrist/Dispensing Optician.

With prior approval Ophthalmologists, Optometrists or Dispensing Opticians who have entered into contractual arrangement with the HSE, may provide dispensing services for children under the age of 12. Each child is entitled to the supply of one pair of contract spectacles every two years from the date of initial prescription or change of prescription.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



Siobhán McArdle,
Head of Operations Primary Care,
Community Operations