



Oifig Ceannasaí Oibríochtaí,
Oibríochtaí Pobail, Cúram Priomhúil

Seomra 243, Ospidéal Dr Steevens,
Lána Steevens, Baile Átha Cliath 8.
D08 W2A8.

Office of the Head of Operations,
Community Operations - Primary Care

Rm 243, Dr Steevens Hospital,
Steevens Lane, Dublin 8. D08 W2A8.

www.hse.ie
@hselive

T: 01 6352209/2682
E: community.primarycare@hse.ie

28th May 2025

Deputy Cleere,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 27765/25 To ask the Minister for Health if a review will be carried out to provide additional HSE funding for children with severe vision impairments (details supplied). At present the HSE provides only one pair of glasses, including lens thinning. However, this single provision is insufficient for children of young ages and their needs. Should these glasses get broken families must bear such costs for these essential medical aids. It is unreasonable to expect families to bear such costs for essential medical aids. We need to ensure children with significant vision impairments receive adequate support, including the provision of a second pair of glasses.

- Peter Cleere

Dear Deputy Cleere,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (PQ 27765/25) which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The Community Ophthalmic Services Scheme (COSS) scheme provides for the dispensing of spectacles and optical devices by optometrists and opticians prescribed by ophthalmologists to children. The HSE continues to reimburse dispensing opticians/optometrists via the Primary Care Reimbursement Service for spectacles and optical devices prescribed by ophthalmologists to children (up to age 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. 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 the initial prescription or the date of the last prescription change.

Teenagers aged 12-16 years who are dependants of Medical Card Holders or who are medical card holders in their own right are entitled to an eye examination and spectacles once every two years if required. In the case of loss or damage, one additional pair may be provided free of charge in any period of 12 months.

In addition to the above, the Regional Health Areas are allocated budgets to fund services in their area which may contribute towards the cost of specialised lens in certain circumstances, usually as advised by an Ophthalmic Consultant and based on clinical need.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Seán McArt

General Manager Primary Care
National Community Operations