



Oifig an Straitéis Chúraim Phríomha agus an Phleanála  
Stiúrthóir Cúnta Náisiúnta  
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**28<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

**Deputy Carol Nolan, T.D.,  
Dail Eireann,  
Kildare St.,  
Dublin 2.**

**Dear Deputy Nolan,**

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to your Parliamentary Questions below which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

**PQ Number: 4540/20** To ask the Minister for Health if each HSE region will adopt standardised criteria for approving low-tech magnification aids as an entitlement under the General Medical Services scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Carol Nolan

### **Response**

The Community Ophthalmic Services Scheme (COSS) provides adult medical card holders with one eye examination for glasses with an ophthalmologist or optometrist free of charge every two years plus the cost covered for a certain range of glasses, if required. It also covers the cost of glasses for children following an eye exam by a HSE community ophthalmic physician. As per the Primary Care Eye Services Review Group Report (2017), the COSS requires amending to allow children over the age of 8 years (and some children aged under 8 years) to be discharged to their local optometrist for biennial review and provision of glasses and to allow for the provision of checks for certain adult patients with glaucoma, cataract and dry AMD. A wider range of lenses, spectacles, filters etc. may also be included under the amended COSS. Preparatory work is underway in relation to amending the COSS and further engagement will take place with the Department of Health.

The provision of vision aids/special devices is managed on an individual basis by the relevant local Health Office. The Primary Care Eye Services Review Group Report (2017) recommends that the list of aids/devices and the approval process is standardised nationally. A National Clinical Advisory Group will then be established to quality assure the COSS and the provision of aids/devices.



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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley', written over a horizontal line.

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**Geraldine Crowley,  
Assistant National Director,  
Primary Care Strategy and Planning**