



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

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8th February, 2024

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

PQ 48677/23 To ask the Minister for Health to outline what vouchers or grants are in place to support parents with the cost of new glasses for their children; if this voucher scheme applies only up to the age of eight years; if he will confirm if there is a standard voucher amount in place across the country or if the level of support varies by geographic area; to outline, in tabular form, the amount payable by each CHO or former health board area; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

- Duncan Smith

Dear Deputy Smith,

The Community Ophthalmic Services Scheme (COSS) provides for dispensing spectacles and optical devices by optometrists and dispensing opticians 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 nine Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs) 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