

## EYE CARE

### **Notes of guidance for the reimbursement of the cost of eye tests and spectacles for users of display screen equipment (DSE)**

#### Status of Policy

Last reviewed in April 2014

If you have any queries about the current application of a policy/procedure, contact Employment Support Services.

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#### **1. Introduction**

North Yorkshire County Council is committed to employee health, safety, care and welfare and as part of this has developed a scheme for the reimbursement of the cost of eyesight tests and spectacles (if necessary) for users of Display Screen Equipment (DSE).

This scheme is designed to also satisfy statutory duties arising from the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health & Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002, which require an employer to provide a user with an appropriate eyesight test and spectacles (if necessary). Please see Appendix 1 for the definition of a Display Screen User. These costs will, therefore, be charged to Service Units budgets, as appropriate.

The scheme is cost effective and enables employees to access a benefit whilst providing choice.

There are no National Insurance or Income Tax implications associated with these reimbursements.

#### **2. Arrangements**

Directorates/Service Units must ensure that every user's workstation is assessed in accordance with the County Council's DSE procedure using the risk assessment form. Further advice on this can be sought from the Health & Safety Risk Management Service, Central Services Directorate.

Should a workstation assessment identify a need for an eye test, or the user wishes to exercise his/her entitlement, staff need to apply via the MyView Expenses screen following the process shown below.

It should be noted that the spectacles or 'special corrective appliances' are to correct vision defects at the viewing distance for the display screen equipment concerned. Those employees who wear glasses or contact lenses are unlikely to require further optical assistance and will not be reimbursed unless an eye test indicates the need for additional optical aids to enable DSE duties to be performed.

### **3. Choice of Scheme**

Employees have a choice of two schemes, both offering a free eye test to DSE users and the cost of necessary spectacles for DSE use up to specified limits.

One scheme is linked to Specsavers and the other can be used at any optician.

#### **3.1 Specsavers**

The Specsavers VDU Voucher must be arranged prior to having the eye-test and entitles the employee to:

- Free eye-test
- If you are found to require glasses specifically and solely for VDU use you are entitled to choose a pair of single vision glasses from the £45 range or if you wish to choose glasses from a higher price range the voucher can be used as a £45 contribution.
- If you are found to require glasses specifically and solely for VDU use and you choose to upgrade to a pair of glasses from the £99 range or over the £45 contribution will increase to a £65 contribution.
- Any employee requiring glasses that are not specifically and solely for VDU use is entitled to a £20 discount if they choose glasses from the £99 range or above.
- You also have access to up to 3 Premium Club Vouchers which cover:
- £20 discount to family members selecting glasses from the £99 and above - please note these vouchers cannot be used in conjunction with the VDU eyecare voucher detailed above.

The employee is responsible for obtaining and taking their vouchers to their local Specsavers store. All costs will be covered either by the voucher or the employee. No additional reimbursement will be paid by NYCC. Lost vouchers will not be reissued.

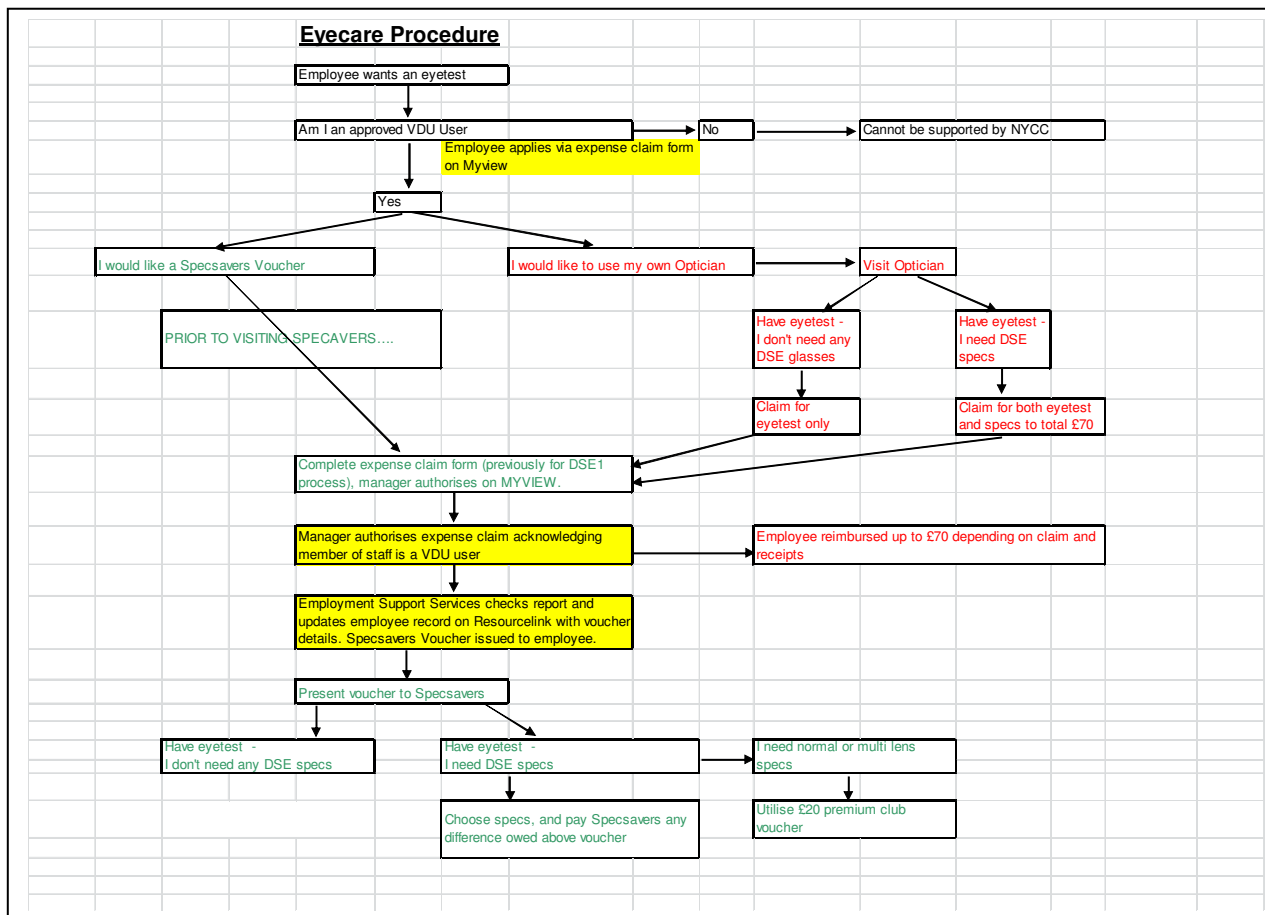
#### **3.2 Other Opticians**

These claims cover an eye test and where necessary basic single vision DSE specific spectacles (plastic lenses and basic plastic frames) in accordance with the current legislation. The actual cost of the eye test plus the cost of single vision spectacles for DSE use will be reimbursed to the employee, and **will not exceed £70**. Any additions to the basic prescription must be paid for by the employee. Proof should be obtained from the optician as to the prescribed spectacles and this should be kept for proof of purchase if required.

The employee visits an optician of his/her choice and is responsible for paying that optician direct. Under no circumstances will North Yorkshire County Council be responsible for paying the optician.

The employee should obtain a receipt from the optician for proof of payment. Receipts must be retained for at least 3 years.

## 4. Application Process



### 4.1 Specsavers Voucher Claims

Applications for the Specsaver vouchers must be authorised by the line manager who will receive an email alert when the application is made. The line manager confirms the individual is required to use a computer for their work and authorises the claim.

Voucher is issued via email by Employment Support Services directly to the member of staff making the application.

The employee presents the voucher to the chosen local store and obtains the necessary eye test and/or spectacles of choice. Vouchers should be used within 12 months of issue and misuse may result in future claims being refused.

### 4.2 Other Opticians Expense Claims

Applications for reimbursement of eye-tests and spectacles for staff from other opticians is dependent on initial authorisation by the line manager who will receive an email alert when the application is made.

Employee visits optician and pays for eye test. If the employee does not require DSE glasses, claims for eye test only via MyView expense claim. This element should not exceed £30. However, if an employee requires DSE glasses, claims for both eye test and spectacles up to the **maximum of £70**. Employee needs to record the name of the optician and the location and also a re-test date if they have been provided with one although this is not mandatory. The line manager confirms the individual is required to use a computer for their work and authorises the claim.

Employee is then reimbursed via payroll up to £70 depending on claim and receipts.

## 5. Monitoring

Resourcing and Reward will monitor this scheme and seek comments from Managers and non-Specsavers opticians may be contacted to confirm the claim. Receipts should be retained by the employee for at least 3 years.

## 6. Further information

The County Council's Display Screen Equipment procedure which includes the risk assessments of DSE workstations can be obtained on the Council's Intranet site and from your Directorate Health & Safety Risk Manager.

## 7. Exceptional Cases

For the avoidance of doubt the scheme will only reimburse costs incurred in line with the outlined rules above. There are **no exceptions** to these rules.

## 8. Definition of a Display Screen User

**In order to qualify for the scheme you must meet the criteria of a DSE user.** The following information relates to these criteria: -

This will determine whether or not the DSE Regulations apply in a particular situation. "User" is defined in the Regulations as "an employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of his/her normal work".

It will generally be appropriate to classify an employee as a user if most or all of the following criteria apply:-

- a) The individual depends on the use of display screen equipment to do the job, as alternative means are not readily available for achieving the same results;
- b) The individual has no discretion as to use or non-use of the display screen equipment;
- c) The individual needs significant training and/or particular skills in the use of display screen equipment to do the job;
- d) The individual normally uses display screen equipment for continuous spells of an hour or more at a time;
- e) The individual uses display screen equipment in this way more or less daily;
- f) Fast transfer of information between the user and screen is an important requirement of the job;
- g) The performance requirement of the system demands high levels of attention and concentration by the user, where the consequences of error may be critical.

Examples of employees who are definitely display screen users are Finance staff, HR & legal staff, Secretaries, Admin Assistants and Officers, Data Input Operators, Graphic Designers, Librarians etc.

Possible display screen users might include Clerical Assistants or Receptionists whose duties involve daily use of equipment.

Unlikely users would be Senior Managers using display screens for occasional monitoring.