



THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

Department of Health

**FOR
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NHS Management Executive
St. Andrew's House
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12 November 1996

Dear Colleagues

**SCOTTISH HEALTH PURCHASING INFORMATION
CENTRE**

REPORT ON PREVENTING BLINDNESS IN DIABETES

Summary

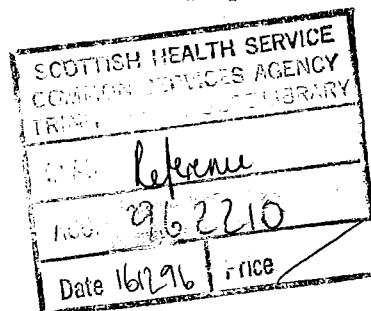
1. A Report by the Scottish Health Purchasing Information Centre on Preventing Blindness in Diabetes is attached. *W*
2. The Report reviews the scope for preventing blindness in diabetes and considers alternative screening methods and costs. It concludes that the "best buy" in screening is a combination of methods according to local factors, including diabetes clinics, specially trained optometrists and mobile camera vans.

Action

3. Purchasers should use this Report, in conjunction with the guidance outlined in the Annex, when assessing local needs. Health Boards are asked to pass copies of this circular to all General Practitioner practices within their area. Sufficient copies will be forwarded to Health Boards for this purpose.

Yours sincerely

KEVIN J WOODS
Director of Purchasing



Addressees

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Supplementary Information

Purchasers may wish to consider using their powers under Part 1 of the NHS (Scotland) Act 1978 to contract with optometrists or ophthalmic medical practitioners (OMPs) to undertake screening of people with diabetes. It may be helpful for the screening of patients to be undertaken at the same time as the testing of sight under NHS general ophthalmic services. As advised in PCA(O)6 1996, the new NHS sight test fee to be paid retrospectively to optometrists for tests carried out on or after 1 April 1996 is £13.71. Following the Government's acceptance of the recommendation of the Doctors' and Dentists' Review Body, the increase in the equivalent fee for OMPs is being staged: for NHS tests carried out on or after 1 April 1996, the new fee is £12.14 and, for tests on or after 1 December, the fee will be £12.25.

The report recommends that screening of diabetic patients should be undertaken regularly, in most cases annually. Recipients will wish to be aware that, under the NHS (General Ophthalmic Services)(Scotland) Regulations 1986, it is for optometrists and OMPs to determine, based on their clinical judgement, how frequently eligible patients should be given NHS sight tests. This means that patients may be given more than one NHS sight test within a 12 month period or they may be tested at longer intervals. If the draft patient information leaflet at Appendix 1 is used, this fact may be made clear by omitting "annual" from the wording of the paragraph entitled "How Do I Get My Eyes Tested".