

Provision of Children's Spectacles Subsidy Service Specification

Purchase unit code: DSS242

1 Introduction

- 1.1** The Children's Spectacle Subsidy (spectacle subsidy) is a contribution towards the costs of certain vision services for eligible children and young people.
- 1.2** The Provider will be funded to administer and make payments for the spectacle subsidy in accordance with this Service Specification.
- 1.3** The Provider will provide an effective and efficient service to eligible children and young people to enable them to overcome identified barriers to participation by meeting their essential needs for spectacle frames and lenses or eye patches and funding the associated costs of assessment and prescription costs.

2 Service objectives

2.1 General

- 2.1.1** The spectacle subsidy is intended to assist low income families with eligible children and young people who need their vision corrected with prescription spectacles.
- 2.1.2** The services the Provider is responsible for are detailed further below, but include:
 - Providing an efficient and effective system for managing all spectacle subsidy claims, evaluating these claims against current eligibility criteria (refer clause 3 below) and processing and making payments (as appropriate) on the claims.
 - Managing and administering the spectacle subsidy in accordance with the policies of the Ministry.
 - Monitoring equity of service provision across localities and reporting any concerns to the Ministry.

2.2 Māori Disability

- 2.2.1** In terms of Government policy directives, DSS is committed to achieve improvements in Māori health status so that Māori have the opportunity to enjoy at least the same level of health as non-Māori.
- 2.2.2** The Māori Disability Action Plan, Whāia Te Ao Mārama, describes the government's four priorities to deliver disability services for Māori. The Provider is required to implement services in line with these four priorities:
 - improve outcomes for Māori
 - support whānau
 - partner with Māori communities

- improve organisational responsiveness.

2.2.3 The Provider will act in accordance with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and will ensure that:

- I. individuals will have access to a service able to be delivered in a manner, and by personnel, both acceptable and appropriate for their cultural safety
- II. individuals and their families/whānau will receive information on, and access to, traditional and alternative interventions, which may be more appropriate or responsive to their needs
- III. the Provider will ensure appropriate bicultural services. This will include, but not necessarily be limited to:
 - a. incorporating tikanga Māori
 - b. recruitment of Māori staff where possible
 - c. establishing links with the tangata whenua and kaumatua from the region
 - d. meeting the culturally appropriate standards defined by DSS
 - e. development of a monitoring strategy with Māori that reviews and evaluates whether Māori needs are being met.

3 Service users

3.1 Inclusions

3.1.1 To be eligible to access the spectacle subsidy, the child or young person must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- I. be under the age of 16 years old at the date of assessment
- II. have an identified sensory (vision) problem that is likely to continue for longer than 6 months and that has resulted in a loss of independence and participation with activities at home, school or the community
- III. have a referral from a registered medical practitioner, Vision Hearing Technician, a school teacher or an allied health professional to the Equipment and Modification Services (EMS) Approved Assessor (Approved Assessor) to establish if prescription spectacles are required
- IV. had their vision assessed by an Approved Assessor (refer clause 4.1)
- V. hold a valid Community Services Card either in the name of the child or his/her parent/guardian or hold a current High Use Health card in the name of the child
- VI. the child or young person has an identified vision need requiring prescription spectacles, lenses or eye patches to achieve a higher quality of vision; or

- VII. the child or young person requires replacement spectacles as his/her current spectacles no longer meet their needs.

3.1.2 For the avoidance of doubt, a child or young person is not eligible for the spectacle subsidy if they fall within the exclusion criteria that are listed below at clause 3.4.

3.2 Spectacle Subsidy Payments

3.2.1 The spectacle subsidy payments that are available to eligible children and young people are listed below:

- **Standard Spectacle Subsidy:** up to a maximum of \$250.00 GST excl. per annum towards:
 - I. the examination or assessment of the child's vision, including
 - II. if clinically appropriate, the prescription of spectacles, (lenses and frames), eye patches or repairs
 - III. frames are to be subsidised to a maximum of \$120 excl GST.
- **Adult Frames Subsidy:** in addition to the Standard Spectacle Subsidy, up to a maximum of \$44.44, GST excl. per annum towards:
 - I. the purchase of larger adult size frames for children and young people who do not fit smaller children's frames.
- **Higher Level Spectacle Subsidy:** in addition to the Standard Spectacle Subsidy and Adult Frames, discretionary funding is available for children and young people with more complex vision needs. More complex vision needs means that the Approved Assessor has confirmed that the child or young person has:
 - I. either an amblyopia or strabismus or
 - II. a rapidly progressing myopia that requires six monthly eye examinations and may result in six monthly changes to the spectacle prescription.

3.3 Subsidy Term

3.3.1 For eligible children and young people the spectacle subsidy:

- is for one year and will start from the date of the first assessment undertaken by their Approved Assessor
- can be accessed up until the date of their 16th birthday
- any remaining unspent balance of the subsidy allocated for the year can be used to replace frames that are broken or which have become too small during the year.

3.4 Exclusions

3.4.1 The following persons are not eligible for the spectacle subsidy:

- Children and young people whose need for the spectacle subsidy is solely due to an eye/vision injury that meets ACC's cover and entitlement criteria under the Accident Compensation Act 2001.

3.4.2 The Provider is not responsible for the following services:

- assessment for and manufacture and/or supply of spectacles, (lenses and frames), eye patches or repairs
- the provision and management of short-term loan optical equipment (i.e., less than six months) or the provision of any optical equipment for trial.

3.4.3 The following services and items are not available as a part of the spectacle subsidy:

- Any type of contact lens (funding may be covered under the Contact Lens Benefit for eligible children and young people).
- Costs associated with eye examinations undertaken within a District Health Boards (these are expected to be free of charge). However, if the eye examination results in a spectacle prescription, eligible children can access the spectacle subsidy.
- Any other items or services not listed explicitly in clause 3.2, such as a spectacle case, lens cleaner or vision therapy services.
- Refurbishment or repairs of the lenses, frames or eye patches (aside from replacement of spectacles that are within the available subsidy amount, as described above at clause 3.3.1).

4 Access to subsidy

4.1 Approved Assessor

4.1.1 An Approved Assessor (optometrist or ophthalmologist) approved under the Ministry's Equipment and Modification Service Accreditation Framework must undertake the examinations and assessments and/or recommend prescriptions that are described in this service specification.

4.2 Provision of the services

4.2.1 The provision of lens and frames can be sourced through either the child's local optometrist or a dispensing optician.

4.2.2 Before making payments to the supplier of the services, the Provider will take appropriate steps to ensure the supplier is transparent about the full cost of all items including payments required by the parent/family.

4.3 Entry to services

4.3.1 Entry to services will be as follows:

- A vision assessment completed by an Approved Assessor following referral from an approved referral source (refer 3.1.1, III). Whether further intervention is

required or not, the Approved Assessor will complete the subsidy claim form which will be signed by both the child's or young person's parent/guardian and the Approved Assessor.

- The Provider will inform the Approved Assessor that the original signed copy of the subsidy form must be kept on file for auditing purposes.
- The Approved Assessor will then forward the subsidy claim form to the Provider (or complete online).
- The Provider will use the information on the subsidy claim form to determine eligibility (as set out in clause 3 of this service specification) and will process eligible claims for payment of services.

Exit from service

4.4.1 The nature of the services provided as part of the spectacle subsidy implies that the service will be in place long term. However, the child or young person's situation may change in one of the following ways and the child may then exit from the service:

- The clients vision needs may change as a result of growth, deterioration or other, requiring reassessment and an application for further and/or alternative environmental support service
- Equipment may require replacement as a result of wear and tear or obsolescence
- The child turns 16 years of age, or
- On permanent departure from New Zealand, the child may take their spectacles with them, but no further replacement will be undertaken once the child has departed permanently from New Zealand

4.5 Coverage and settings

4.5.1 The Provider will endeavour to ensure that:

- the Services will be provided nationally and equitably, to all eligible persons within New Zealand
- there are no barriers to access through cultural beliefs and practices (where 'cultural' denotes age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation).

4.5.2 The services may be provided in a range of settings including a dispensing retailer, home or educational setting as long as they meet the eligibility criteria defined in clause 3.

5 Service components

5.1 General

5.1.1 The key components of the services that the Provider will provide are detailed below in clause 5.2 to 5.5.

5.2 Management of subsidy claims

5.2.1 The Provider will be responsible for the provision of an efficient and effective system for managing, evaluating claims against current eligibility criteria and processing all claims for spectacle subsidy from Approved Assessors.

5.2.2 This will include the development and modification of data bases and information systems and in consultation with DSS, the production of subsidy claim forms, Assessor Manuals (describing eligibility policy and processes and procedures to be followed for all subsidy claims).

5.2.3 The Provider will implement a robust and flexible management information system eg accounts payable, processing, assessor and supplier's databases.

5.2.4 The key requirements for the Provider when processing subsidy claims are as follows:

- immediate contact with the Approved Assessor regarding incomplete detail on subsidy claims
review of eligibility
- ongoing information distribution to all Approved Assessors to ensure they are familiar with current policy that may affect the service.

5.3 Payments to Suppliers

5.3.1 The key requirements for the Provider when processing payments of subsidy claims are as follows:

- Approved subsidy claim payments are paid on the 22nd day of the month following receipt of properly completed claims and invoices made in the previous month. If the date falls on a weekend or public holiday, the payment will be made on the next business day.
- Payment is made direct to the supplier (i.e., store) of the examination or spectacles supplier. The subsidy amount will be deducted from an individual's account by the supplier, maintaining an accurate and up to date balance.

5.4 Provision of Information

5.4.1 The Provider will develop, maintain and provide the following information resources:

- Written information to all Approved Assessors and where relevant, consumers (by the way of website, newsletters, email updates etc) to inform them of current

policy and procedural changes and any changes/updates, waiting times, and processing times that may affect on-going service delivery.

- The spectacle subsidy manual including ensuring the Approved Assessors manual is kept up to date. The manual will describe in detail all processes, protocols and procedures to be followed for every subsidy claim.

5.4.2 All information should be prepared in plain language.

5.5 Budget management

5.5.1 The Provider will:

- Effectively manage resources within the allocated annual budget as set out by the Ministry.
- Comply with best practice financial management.
- Manage approval of subsidy claims so the annual budget, as allocated by the Ministry, is not exceeded.
- Monitor the value of subsidy claims received against the available budget and apply best endeavours to forecast demand.
- Advise DSS in the monthly expenditure reporting (see clause 10) of any concerns about the budget and expenditure.
- If the service cost associated with demand for services varies by 10 percent of the monthly budget allocation, the Provider will report to DSS on the reason for the variance along with strategies to manage the increased demand if necessary.

5.6 Staffing

5.6.1 The Provider will maintain appropriate levels of staffing to ensure that the service can be provided effectively and efficiently. Staffing will encompass skills to enable effective:

- Service Management
- Subsidy Claim processing
- Management Information systems
- Financial Systems.

5.6.2 The Provider will ensure that staff are knowledgeable about and conversant with all policy and procedures.

6 Service linkages

6.1 The Provider will develop strong links and service relationships with the at least the following, but there may be others for whom regular contact and liaison is relevant and necessary:

- Approved Assessors
- Suppliers of equipment and services
- ENABLE Information
- Royal NZ Foundation of the Blind (RNZFB)
- New Zealand Association of Optometrists (NZAO)
- New Zealand Society of Ophthalmologists (NZAO)
- Vision Hearing Technicians (VHT)
- Registered Medical Practitioners
- Allied Health Professionals
- Teachers
- Dispensing Opticians

6.2 Where appropriate, the Provider will develop written service protocols with of those listed above to ensure the service can be operated in an effective and timely manner.

7 Quality requirements

7.1 The Provider is required to comply with the Provider Quality Specifications as set out in Section B of the Agreement. The Provider will also meet the following specific quality requirements:

7.1.1 Undertake audits of Approved Assessors when there appear ongoing instances of subsidy claims being submitted outside of eligibility, funding guidelines and processes or if there are other grounds to consider an audit. This includes:

- seeking the advice of a relevant professional group or individual to conduct an independent audit
- sharing any findings, recommendations and actions with DSS.

8 Performance requirements and monitoring

8.1 DSS has a responsibility to properly manage its resources and ensure it is achieving appropriate value for money for the purchase of required goods and services. This includes ensuring consideration of quality and cost effectiveness in relation to the management of the spectacle subsidy.

8.2

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Tables One to Four below, in respect of all services provided by the Provider, have been developed for service and performance monitoring. In these Tables, the “Review Point” means the agreed minimum threshold for each Performance Measure and the “Target” is the agreed target for each Performance Measure.

- 8.3** In addition to the reporting requirements described in clause 10, the Provider will report against the measures described in tables one to four below on a quarterly basis.
- 8.4** If the Provider obtains a result for a Performance Measure that is outside the agreed Review Point, DSS may initiate performance monitoring as per clause 8.5 and 8.6 below.

Table One: Processing: Timeliness of the Service

Performance Measures (Deliverables)	Review Point	Target
Correctly completed Subsidy Claim Forms are processed within 5 working days of their receipt (online or in hard copy)	95%	98%

Table Two: Payments: Timeliness of the Service

Performance Measures (Deliverables)	Review Point	Target
Correctly completed Subsidy Claim Forms are paid within 22 working days of their receipt for the month proceeding.	95%	98%

Table Three: Quality of Service

Performance Measures (Deliverables)	Review Point	Target
Complaints received from any source regarding the quality of service provided	Greater than 5 per month	No more than 5 per month
Complaints received from any source regarding the quality of service provided by the Provider are followed up within 5 working days of receipt.	98%	100%

Table Four: Reporting Requirements

Performance Measures (Deliverables)	Review Point	Target
All required reports are provided on time according to agreed timeframes with DSS.	90%	100%
All required reports provided are accurate and complete.	90%	100%

8.5 Performance monitoring

8.5.1 The purpose of performance monitoring is to monitor progress and quality of service delivery under this agreement against expected performance.

8.5.2 The Ministry may initiate the performance monitoring process (see clause 8.6 below) if the Provider obtains a result for a Performance Measure that is outside the agreed Review Point (see tables one to four above).

8.5.3 The following factors may be reviewed as part of performance monitoring: ☐

☐ any Performance Measures detailed in tables one to four above ☐ any ☐
other contractual matter.

8.6 Performance Monitoring Process

8.6.1 The performance monitoring process will consist of the following steps:

8.6.2 Analysis of performance monitoring data will occur after DSS receives each Quarterly Report as required in clause 10.

8.6.3 When the service delivery falls outside the review points described in section 8.3, DSS will contact the Provider to discuss this and/or any other identified concerns related to overall performance of the Provider.

8.6.4 If a change in performance is deemed appropriate by DSS then a follow-up discussion will be undertaken three months after the initial discussion between the Provider and DSS.

8.6.5 If a change is observed by DSS, and performance is back within appropriate parameters, then DSS will provide feedback to the Provider and revert to ongoing routine monitoring.

8.6.6 If DSS determines that a change in performance is still required a Performance Review may be initiated (issues based audit).

8.6.7 Depending on the outcome of the Performance Review the Provider may be given the performance monitoring process may be given notification of an appropriate period of time by which to achieve a change in performance (the stated period).

8.6.8 Data analysis and further review will occur at the end of the stated period. If no change is observed DSS may issue a notice of breach of contract in accordance with Part 1, Section A, A27.

9 Purchase units

The following purchase unit(s) apply to this service.

PU ID	PU Short Name	PU Measure	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	
			Frequency	Information
DSS242	Provision of Children's Spectacle Subsidy	Service	Monthly	Volume and Dollar Expenditure (GST excl) (section 10.5)
			Quarterly	See attached reporting requirements (section 10.5)
			Annual	See attached reporting requirements (section 10.5)

10 Reporting requirements

10.1 The Provider's reporting requirements are set out in the table below. When reporting, the Provider will use the Performance Monitoring Templates provided by DSS and will report on each of the relevant reporting requirements as detailed in the table at clause 10.5.

10.2 The Provider will also complete the DSS Monthly Reporting Template recording the monthly expenditure on the Spectacle Subsidy.

10.3 In addition to reports described in the table below, the Provider will:

- ☐ respond to ad hoc reporting requests from DSS within the timeframe indicated
- ☐ meet with DSS Contract Manager on a quarterly basis (or more often as necessary) to discuss reporting trends and management of risks and issues.

10.4 The reporting requirements may need to change during the course of this contract, if this occurs, DSS will notify the Provider and will involve them in relevant discussions.

10.5 Table of Reporting Requirements

PU ID	PU Short Name	PU Measure	Reporting Requirements	
			Frequency	Information



DSS226	Provision of Spectacles Subsidy	Service	Quarterly (see clause 10.6.3)	Volume Reporting Requirements Type of Claim 1. Total number of spectacle subsidy claims 2. Total number of spectacle subsidy claims broken into; ☐ Total number of Standard Spectacle Subsidy claims ☐ Total number of Higher-Level Subsidy claims ☐ Total number of Adult Frame claims Assessments 1. Number of assessments ☒ Broken into Ophthalmologists & Optometrists 2. Number of assessments where no intervention was required ☒ Broken into Ophthalmologists & Optometrists Demographics 1. Total number of spectacle subsidy claims by age ☒ 2 and under, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16 2. Total number of spectacle subsidy claims by ethnicity ☒ NZ European, Māori, Samoan, Cook Island Māori, Tongan, Niuean, Chinese, Indian, Other such as Dutch, Japanese, Tokelauan Māori.
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				Pacific Island 3. Total number of spectacle subsidy claims by gender ☐ Male, female and unknown Financial reporting 1. The total number of claims where costs have been incurred over and above the available spectacle subsidy per quarter. 2. The total number of claims where the average cost has been incurred over and above the available spectacle subsidy in the following bands: ☐ greater than \$50 ☐ greater than \$100 ☐ greater than \$200 ☐ greater than \$300 ☐ greater than \$400 ☐ greater than \$500 ☐ greater than \$600 3. The average cost of the Higher-Level subsidy per quarter 4. Total number of correctly completed Subsidy Claim forms processed within five days of their receipt. 5. Total number of correctly completed Subsidy Claim forms are paid within 22 working days of their receipt for the month proceeding. 6. Total number of complaints received from any source regarding the quality of the service provided 7. Average number of working days (from the day received) taken to respond to complaints received from any source regarding the quality of the service provided.
			Monthly	Complete the monthly expenditure on the Spectacle Subsidy as part of Equipment and Modification Services (EMS) expenditure reporting template.
			Quarterly	Narrative Quarterly Report The Provider will complete a quarterly report to DSS. This report will provide qualitative and quantitative information that is of benefit to the Provider and DSS.

			Annually	Annual Narrative Report This report must, at a minimum, include: • annual trends comparative to previous years • benefits and learning's from this service.
			As indicated by the Ministry	Ad hoc Reporting The Provider must respond to ad hoc reporting requests from DSS within the timeframe indicated.
			Quarterly or as required	Verbal Reporting The Provider will meet with DSS Contract Manager on a quarterly basis (or as necessary) to discuss reporting trends and management of risks and issues.

11 Other reporting details

11.1 Narrative reports can be submitted at any time if there are issues that you wish to raise e.g. unmet need.

11.2 The report for each quarter is due by the 20th of the month following the end of the quarter. Delays beyond this date must be notified to us.

11.3 The quarters for reporting are:

1 July to 30 September	due by 20 October
1 October to 31 December	due by 20 January
1 January to 31 March	due by 20 April
April to 30 June	due by 20 July

throughout the term of the agreement

11.4 Where the agreement begins or ends part way through a quarter, the report will be for that part of the quarter which falls within the term of the agreement.

12 Service development

12.1 Ongoing work by DSS around eligibility, access, targeting and prioritisation of funding, including changes in reporting requirements, for all DSS funded services may also have an impact on who can access the spectacle subsidy, in what circumstances and to what level. The Provider will be given at least 90 days' notice of any changes in current service.

12.2 DSS is undertaking a review of the spectacle subsidy. As part of this review, changes and improvements may be needed to manage the spectacle subsidy within the allocated budget now and into the future, while improving outcomes for children who need spectacles. The Provider will be consulted on proposed changes.