



Budget 2025 submission to Government

Protecting Ireland's eye health and preventing avoidable sight loss

About us

[FODO Ireland](#) is the representative body for primary eye care providers in Ireland. The Association exists to be the collective voice of members and to represent them at national level to ensure they can deliver accessible, high-quality, patient-focused eye care to people of all ages and means in their local communities.

FODO Ireland membership includes, amongst others, Specsavers, Vision Express, Optical Express and the Hakim Group of independent practices. As a collective, FODO Ireland members deliver over 65% of all eye examinations and employ the majority of CORU registered and ancillary staff.

Summary

FODO Ireland members deliver eye care services under both the Department of Health and HSE's Community Ophthalmic Services Scheme (COSS) and the Department of Social Protection's PRSI Treatment Benefit Scheme (TBS).

The government has already committed to uplifting sight test fees, which have fallen behind and not yet recovered from FEMPI (as well as to tackle inequalities in access to eye care for children)ⁱ. We are calling for this commitment to be delivered in this budget to ensure optical practices are able to continue to deliver essential eye care under TBS and COSS.

With the right budgetary support, we can protect eye health, improve patient outcomes and reduce the long-term costs to the State of avoidable blindness.

Given the significant impact of inflation, rising optometrists' salaries, and interest rates adding costs to the provision of eye care, we are calling for the TBS and COSS eye examination fees both to be increased to €40.

Detail

TBS fees

Fees under the TBS have not increased since October 2017, over which time staffing and business costs have increased considerably.

Had fees uplifted in line with inflation, the eye examination fee would now be €36.94. This is still well below the estimated cost of providing an eye examination, which we estimate to be more than €55 per episode.

The Minister for Social Protection has committed to reviewing the feesⁱⁱ. We believe it would be reasonable and affordable for the Government to uplift the TBS eye examination fee to €40 this year, and other fees and benefits at a similar rate in line with inflation since October 2017ⁱⁱⁱ.

As we previously committed to do in our Budget 2024 submission, we have commissioned research into the costs of providing an eye examination to inform future submissions.

COSS fees

The COSS contract requires eye examination fees to match the eye examination fees for the TBS scheme (which makes sense given the examinations are the same), and, while this has not been the case since 2017, the Minister for Health has committed to ensuring parity^{iv}.

Therefore, standard eye examination fees under the COSS contract should be increased to €40 this year and we also seek financial correction of the historic difference in fees between COSS and TBS since 2017 as highlighted in our previous submission.

As noted above, we have commissioned research into the costs of providing an eye examination.

More information

Detailed costings (using inflation to 2023), methodology and implications of change were included in our Budget submission in August 2023, which we include as an Annex to this submission for completeness.

We hope this year's estimates enable Ministers and Departments to deliver on these long overdue commitments and would be very happy to meet with Ministers or officials or to submit further evidence to support our case if that would be helpful.

ⁱ [PQ Response to Catherine Connolly TD](#) (Independent), 23 July 2024
[PQ Response to Marian Harkin TD](#) (Independent), 23 July 2024
[PQ Response to Mattie McGrath TD](#) (Independent), 9 July 2024
[PQ Response to Alan Dillon TD](#) (Fine Gael), 2 July 2024
[PQ Response to Mark McSharry TD](#) (Independent), 11 June 2024
[PQ Response to Michael Creed TD](#) (Fine Gael), 11 June 2024
[PQ Response to Steven Matthews](#), (Green Party) 28 May 2024
[PQ Response to Josepha Madigan TD](#) (Fine Gael), 28 May 2024
[PQ Response to Marc Ó Cathasaigh](#) (Green Party), 21 May 2024
[PQ Response to Sean Canney TD](#) (Independent), 16 May 2024
[PQ Response to Jennifer Murnane O'Connor TD](#) (Fianna Fáil), 14 May 2024
[PQ Response to Claire Kerrane TD](#) (Sinn Féin) 14 May 2024
[PQ Response to Jim O'Callaghan TD](#) (Fianna Fáil), 23 April 2024
[PQ Response to Colm Burke TD](#) (Fine Gael), 7 March 2024
[PQ Response to Colm Burke TD](#) (Fine Gael), 24 October 2023
[PQ Response to Colm Burke TD](#) (Fine Gael), 26 September 2023

ⁱⁱ [PQ Response to Sean Canney TD](#) (Independent), 16 May 2024
[PQ Response to Colm Burke TD](#) (Fine Gael), 20 March 2024

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/cpicalculator>

^{iv} [PQ Response to Catherine Connolly TD](#) (Independent), 23 July 2024
[PQ Response to Marian Harkin TD](#) (Independent), 23 July 2024
[PQ Response to Alan Dillon TD](#) (Fine Gael), 2 July 2024
[PQ Response to Mark McSharry TD](#) (Independent), 11 June 2024
[PQ Response to Jim O'Callaghan TD](#) (Fianna Fáil), 23 April 2024
[PQ Response to Colm Burke TD](#) (Fine Gael), 7 March 2024
[PQ Response to Colm Burke TD](#) (Fine Gael), 24 October 2023