

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIAL

Title of Report: Charges for Contact Lenses Wearers
Paper No: 160/10
Date: 29 July 2010
Report of: Director of Education, Health and Social Services

1.0 Purpose

1.1 To propose the introduction of an additional appointment charge to contact lenses wearers who are not using them for specific medical reasons.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that Members support the proposal of an additional appointment charge for those who wear contact lenses who have not had them prescribed for specific medical purposes. The cost of an appointment is £35 so there will be two costs of £35 for those requiring contact lenses.

3.0 Summary of Financial Implications

	2010/11	2011/12	Full Year
	£	£	£
<u>Operating Revenue</u>	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000

4.0 Background

4.1 The development of contact lenses for the purposes other than those required for medical reasons has led to an increase in requests for the provision of this service.

4.2 The present tender holder NiCare does offer a service to prescribe and then care for contact lenses wearers. The tender holder is clear during the appointment to note that the Falkland Islands do not have the capacity to manage contact lenses problems as they would be routinely managed in the UK as there is not the relevant emergency ophthalmology service in the Islands. They are clear that the service is offered at the risk of the wearer.

4.3 Even with this information there are more people requesting to have contact lenses prescribed.

4.4 The appointment to have the lenses prescribed and then for the follow up care which at a minimum should be annually but occasionally six monthly is in addition to the normal time that is allocated for the eye examination for the prescription of spectacles, there is therefore a resource and cost implication to continuing the service.

4.5 The provision of contact lenses requires:

- a) the initial examination to ascertain the prescription,
- b) the trial of lenses to assess the prescription and suitability for the wearer,
- c) the appointment to learn to handle the lenses and be finally fitted.
- d) follow up annually at least and depending on type of lens six monthly.

4.6 These appointments are in addition to the normal appointment to examine the eye and prescribe spectacles.

4.7 In the Falklands usually b and c are amalgamated as there is not the opportunity for the trial to be separate from the handling of the lenses. This does mean that there are times when the appointment encroaches on the next booked patient's appointment time.

4.8 The follow up appointments are essential to note any subtle but chronic and serious complications that may arise. The follow up looks at the physiology of the cornea which is not part of the routine eye examination.

4.9 It is estimated that there are about 60-70 contact lens wearers in the Islands who are not prescribed them for medical reasons and if they are seen twice a year then the proposed revenue of £5,000 is estimated.

5.0 Contact Lenses

5.1 Contact lenses wearers are at particular risk from eye injury and eye infection as the lenses offer the opportunity for serious infections to develop very quickly.

5.2 For their long term use of the lenses careful follow up has to be offered to look for corneal ulcers, pseudomonal infections and corneal abrasions etc.

5.3 There has been one aeromedical evacuation (not funded by FIG) from the Islands caused through a contact lens wearer having a serious corneal ulcer.

5.4 The charges will reflect the increased workload related to the prescribing of contact lenses.

6.0 Financial Implications

There will be an increase in revenue of £5,000 which is already included in the approved budget.

7.0 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications

8.0 Human Resources Implications

There are no human resources implications