

South East Optometry Commissioning Team Newsletter - November 2021

SEOCT 04/21

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the November 2021 edition of the Optometry Commissioning Team's quarterly newsletter. This newsletter includes articles regarding:

- COVID Booster for optometry staff
- Afghan relocation and resettlement scheme
- Recording Patient Safety Incidents - new process
- Eye health needs for people who cannot leave home during this pandemic/winter flu
- "Classes in Glasses"
- Reporting Changes Affecting Your GOS Contract
- Temporary changes to GOS hours
- PCSE: Online GOS Claiming
- Help with patient GOS eligibility queries
- NHS England and NHS Improvement South East Eye Health Information for Professionals
- Sending Post to NHS England Offices

COVID Booster for optometry staff

Booster vaccine doses are available on the NHS for people most at risk from COVID-19 who have had a 2nd dose of a vaccine **at least 6 months ago** (although this duration is currently being reviewed). This includes frontline health and social care workers.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) booster vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

For more information regarding the procedures for frontline workers to obtain the booster vaccination please see guidance attached with this email.

Afghan relocation and resettlement scheme- access to General Ophthalmic Services (GOS)

Individuals and families arriving into the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme or Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme (ACRS) will be entitled to free NHS care. People supported by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) under section 95 are issued with HC2 certificates, usually within 2 weeks of their arrival.

However, if the patient attends an optometry practice but has not yet received their HC2 certificate, the advice to the practice is as follows:

- Do not refuse the eye care service, or see them as a private patient
- Complete the GOS form as standard, recording the bridging hotel as the patient's address
- Tick 'Universal credit' as the eligibility criteria
- Tick the 'Evidence not seen' option

- Keep a note on the patient’s record that the eligibility category had been selected as per guidance from NHS England & NHS Improvement on submitting GOS claims for Afghan refugees

Interpreter Services are available through england.se.primarycare@nhs.net

Recording Patient Safety Incidents - New Process

The current National Reporting and Learning System (NRLS) is being replaced by The Learn From Patient Safety Events (LFPSE).

This is a single national NHS system for recording patient safety events for all healthcare providers, including primary care opticians. Recording safety events supports patient safety whether they result in harm or not, providing vital shared insight and learning into what can go wrong in healthcare and the reasons why.

To access [LFPSE](#) you will need to set up an NHS England Applications Account. To record an incident, you will be asked the following questions:

Job role

- Use ‘Other clinical profession’ as the job role
- Organisation
- Optometrists are within the ‘Primary Care Network (PCN) or GP Practice’ section – please see the image below. However, it may be that not all optometrists are present in the list. If you cannot see your organisation, please send your organisation name, address and ODS code to this helpdesk and it will be added for you.

NHSI.patientsafetyhelpdesk@nhs.net

The organisation(s) you work for
You can select more than one organisation. If you work for a GP practice, select Primary Care Network.

Organisation (main)
Primary Care Network (PCN) or GP Practice

Primary Care Network or GP Practice name
Please type at least 3 characters of your Primary Care Network or GP Practice name and select from the suggestions below.

opti

EYE 2 EYE OPTICIANS (Y05092)
ORTHOPTIC DEPARTMENT (Y04571)
OPTICS PROJECT PILOT (Y04597)
OPTIONS OUTREACH SERVICE (Y02687)
OPTIMUSEXTENDEDACCESS (Y06200)
BOOTS OPTICIANS (Y04262)

Enter your main email address.

Meeting the eye health needs of people who cannot leave home

The latest *Guidance from the Primary Eyecare Sector's Domiciliary Eyecare Committee (27 September 2021)* has been published which sets out addressing the needs of individuals, particularly older adults, who are unable to leave home unaided owing to physical or mental illness or disability are potentially at higher risk of eye disease and vision problems than the general population.

Please see guidance attached with this email.

Glasses in Classes

The Department for Education has announced that thousands of pupils will benefit from an expanded programme that provides two free pairs of glasses to improve reading and writing by tackling poor eyesight.

[Data](#) shows that 30 per cent of pupils who need glasses have not been to an optician, alongside disadvantaged children being less likely to get, or wear, the glasses they need. This can hold children back.

The 'Glasses in Classes' scheme aims to level up outcomes and will be adapted for five disadvantaged areas in England, under the [Opportunity Area](#) programme. This will reach more than 9,000 pupils in at least 225 schools.

Children identified as needing glasses will receive one pair for home and one for school, helping them concentrate in the classroom and improve their literacy skills.

For more information: [Free glasses to tackle poor eyesight and boost literacy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Reporting changes affecting your GOS contract

There is a contractual obligation to inform us via the NHS Business Services Authority, whether by email to nhsbsa.pao-contractadmin@nhs.net or post (see attached contact sheet), of any change affecting your GOS contract as listed below:

- Change of days or hours that you provide GOS
- Change of contact details, including email, telephone number/fax number of the contractor
- Relocation of premises or adding additional premises*
- Change of Registered Office for corporate bodies
- Notification of changes of Director/Secretary/CEO in a corporate body
- Changes to the contractor status e.g. individual (sole trader) / partnership/corporate body
- Changes in partnerships or limited liability partnerships, which includes changes to the members of the partnership or death in service of a partner
- Change of bank details / authorised signatories
- Termination of GOS contract

*If you are relocating premises, please contact us before the moving date, giving us plenty of notice to arrange a practice visit. In preparation for issuing a contract variation, all new premises must be inspected by NHS England prior to continuing to provide GOS. Contract variations will be issued to practices that are fully compliant with the Equality Act i.e. a patient in a wheelchair needs to be able to enter the practice and be able to access the testing room.

The QIO checklist covers all aspects of the contract and will assist you in preparing for the practice inspection. The checklist can be found at www.qualityinoptometry.co.uk

You must notify NHS England South East Optometry Team by email to england.southeastoptometry@nhs.net of the following changes:

- Changes in regular performers
- 24-hour retirements (OMP contractors only)
- Planned or unplanned closures
- Suspension of GOS services, such as suspension for refurbishment or holiday
- Notification within 7 days of a change to your personal circumstances, such as a GOC investigation, conviction, charge of an offence, or insolvency

Please remember, it is important to notify a change in any of the above two sections. In some cases, the failure to do so could result in a contract breach notice being issued.

Temporary changes to GOS hours

If you temporarily changed your GOS hours due to the pandemic and this change has exceeded three months, you will need to contact us to discuss a permanent change to your contracted hours.

PCSE: Online GOS Claiming

Any contractor who has yet to migrate to electronic submissions will receive full support from PCSE: [Ophthalmic Payments - Primary Care Support England](#)

Further support for opticians and practices can be located at: [Opticians and Ophthalmic Practices - Primary Care Support England](#)

Help with patient GOS eligibility queries

If you have questions about help with patient entitlement to receive GOS or any other health costs you can call the Help with Health Costs helpline on **0300 330 1343**, the phone is usually answered immediately and they will advise you on all aspects of entitlement.

NHS England and NHS Improvement South East Eye Health Information for Professionals

We are currently working towards a South East webpage which will incorporate guidance for all professionals within our region.

Sending Post to NHS England Offices

The NHSEI South East Optometry Team remind you not to post any correspondence, but to email us: ENGLAND.southeastoptometry@nhs.net Our details can be found in the attached South East Region Contact Information.

South East Optometry Commissioning Team
NHS England and NHS Improvement - South East Region

e: england.southeastoptometry@nhs.net w: www.england.nhs.uk