

South East Optometry Commissioning Team Newsletter – February 2022

SEOCT 01/22

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the February 2022 edition of the Optometry Team's quarterly newsletter. This newsletter includes articles regarding:

- EeRS Optom Newsletter
- Change of bank details/authorised signatories
- Reporting changes to GOS contract
- Second pair requests for children
- NHS England South East Eye Health Information webpage
- Domiciliary providers accessing care homes
- Special School Eye Care Service
- Access to PPE
- Temporary changes to confirmatory PCR tests
- IPC guidance remains in primary care settings
- PCSE online GOS claiming
- Help with patient GOS eligibility queries

EeRS Optom Newsletter Jan 2022

In October 2021, NHS South East England commissioned Vantage's Rego platform to provide optometry referral services following their inclusion in the NHSX Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework for Electronic Eye Care Referral Systems (EeRS).

The EeRS team have issued a newsletter to provide an update on how the system has worked so far and the impact it has had on referrals over the past three months.

A copy of the EeRS Newsletter has been sent as a separate document.

Change of bank details and/or authorised signatories

If you need to request a change to your bank account, please contact NHSBSA nhsbsa.pao-contractadmin@nhs.net. You will be asked to complete a declaration of banking details form, to be signed by all directors, partners or Individuals party to the contract.

We will apply to Shared Business Services (SBS) for a new financial reference code and, once complete, we will inform PCSE to make future GOS payments to your new bank account. Please be aware that the process can take several weeks. In the interim, please continue to submit your GOS claims as normal and **do not close down your old bank account** until you receive confirmation that we have completed your request.

Reporting other changes affecting your GOS contract

There is a contractual obligation to inform us via the NHS Business Services Authority. Email nhsbsa.pao-contractadmin@nhs.net 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 and telephone number
- 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
- Contractor status changes 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
- 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

If you have continued with reduced GOS hours for longer than three months, you will need to email the Team to discuss whether this will become a permanent change to your contracted GOS hours.

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.

Second pair applications for children

We have received several applications for second pairs of specs for children which do not meet the criteria for approval, so we thought it would be helpful to restate them here. Applications will normally be approved if a child is aged 7 or under and the prescription falls into the GOS 3 band B or above and there is a history of spectacle loss or breakage (2 or more repairs in 6 months).

Additionally, applications will normally be approved if a child is aged over 7 or is a “looked after child” and they have a further illness that causes the frequent breakage/loss and the prescription falls into the GOS 3 band B or above and there is a history of spectacle loss or breakage (2 or more repairs in 6 months) and there is evidence to suggest that the patient’s education or quality of life is likely to be affected if they are without their spectacles.

A second pair application may also be approved with discretion for children of any age if: the prescription falls into the GOS 3 band, is in voucher A (those children with high A values may still be at risk) and a clinical adviser has reviewed the case and is satisfied that the application meets the necessary criteria.

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

We have now established a South East webpage which will incorporate guidance for all optometry professionals and their teams within our South East region:

[NHS England and NHS Improvement South East » South East Region Eye Health](#)

Domiciliary optometrists struggle to access care homes

Domiciliary contractors are continuing to experience problems with accessing care homes due to the Omicron Covid variant outbreak: [Domiciliary optometrists struggle to access care homes \(aop.org.uk\)](#)

Special School Eye Care Service

The Special School Eye Care Service is an in-school eye examination service for children in special school settings in England. The aim of the service is to improve access to eye care services for all children with a learning disability. NHS England and NHS Improvement has identified a small group of GOS contractors to pilot the service. For the latest information please visit: [Special School Eye Care Service | NHSBSA](#)

Access to PPE

The offer of free personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline health and care staff extended until 31 March 2023: [Free PPE for frontline extended for another year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Call the customer service team **0800 876 6802** if you have any questions about using the PPE portal, including, for example:

- problems with registering
- problems with ordering
- If you believe you are eligible but have not been invited

Updated UK Health Security Agency guidance

Confirmatory PCR tests are temporarily suspended for positive lateral flow test results. From 11 January 2022, those who receive positive lateral flow device (LFD) results for COVID-19 will be required to self-isolate immediately and will not be required to take a confirmatory PCR test: [Confirmatory PCR tests to be temporarily suspended for positive lateral flow test results - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/confirmatory-pcr-tests-to-be-temporarily-suspended-for-positive-lateral-flow-test-results)

IPC guidance remains in primary care settings

Following the Government announcement that from Thursday 27 January 2022 face coverings will no longer be mandatory in public places, primary care colleagues are reminded that the UK Health Security Agency's [infection prevention control \(IPC\) guidance](#) remains in place for all staff and patients, in GP practices, dental practices, optometrists and pharmacies to ensure that everyone is protected.

Please continue to encourage patients to wear a face covering to keep staff and other patients safe. Resources supporting IPC guidance, including social media assets and posters to use at entrances to notify visitors that they need to wear a face covering, [are available to download](#) from the Campaign Resource Centre.

PCSE: Online GOS Claiming

Any contractor yet to migrate to electronic submissions will receive full support from PCSE. There is a series of You Tube videos that walkthrough submitting different types of GOS forms via PCSE Online: [Katrina Explains PCSE Online for Ophthalmic Payments - YouTube](#)

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**.

Best wishes,

South East Optometry Commissioning Team
NHS England and NHS Improvement - South East Region
e: england.southeastoptometry@nhs.net
w: www.england.nhs.uk