

# NHS England South (Wessex) – Primary Care Update Optometry Bulletin

Issue 1/January 2019

## **About this bulletin**

Welcome to the 1st edition of the NHS England – South (Wessex) Optometry Bulletin for 2019. Please share this information with your performers and colleagues.

If you have any questions or wish to provide feedback, please contact [england.wessexoptometry@nhs.net](mailto:england.wessexoptometry@nhs.net) or phone 0113 824 9810

*Please make sure you always let us know if you change your email address.*

## **Contract Changes**

Please inform NHS England – South (Wessex) if there are any changes to your contract this includes:

- changes to hours
- director changes
- change of registered address
- changes to the partnership
- relocation of current premises
- additional premises or removal of premises
- 24 hour retirement for OMP
- death of an individual contractor

Please inform the team as soon as possible by emailing [england.wessexoptometry@nhs.net](mailto:england.wessexoptometry@nhs.net) or phoning the admin line on 0113 8249810.

For further information on the process please see Chapter 9 – (Contract Variations) and Chapter 12 – (Death of a Contractor) of the Eye Health Policy Book that can be found on the NHS England website. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/primary-care/optometry>

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## GOS Mandatory Contract Variations

We will shortly be issuing GOS Mandatory Contract Variations to all existing contracts. The variations include amendments to clauses and electronic form submission. The contract variations will be emailed to you so it is very important that we hold up to date contact details for you. We will require a signed copy to be returned to us within 14 days of receipt.

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## NHS UK Profile Updating and Patient Feedback and Comments

You are responsible for the management of your NHS UK website profile to do this you must have editing rights. You can request this by emailing the NHS UK website Service Desk on [nhswebsite.servicedesk@nhs.net](mailto:nhswebsite.servicedesk@nhs.net)

Information on your profile is grouped into modules. You can edit modules that have been marked with the 'Edit' or 'add' icons.

Patients can provide feedback and comments on NHS UK website regarding the service that was provided to them by the optical premises. These comments can be positive as well as negative. Patients can also select whether they would recommend the optician to a friend or not. It is important to be aware of the feedback and have the ability to manage patient feedback.

Each contractor has the ability to reply to each comment. The replies appear directly beneath the original comment. When a comment is left on a practice profile, the 'comment administrator' will receive an email from NHS UK about the comment.

To respond to comments the contractor must log into the organisation response tool.

For more information about responding to comments please visit the managing patient feedback page on NHS UK website that can be found by clicking the link <https://www.nhs.uk/about-us/manage-user-comments/>

The NHS UK guide on Optician profiles on NHS UK can be found by clicking on the link <https://www.nhs.uk/about-us/manage-provider-profiles/>

Please ensure that you **do not** amend opening hours on your profile. The opening hours reflect the times as set out in your contract under clause 29. If you wish to change the opening hours you will need to request a variation to the contract. Once the variation has been approved and signed by both parties the change in opening hours can be made on the NHS UK website.

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## Enhanced Sight Test

The growing trend for Optometry Practices to offer more complex diagnostic or investigative tests occasionally leads to complaints from patients about additional charges.

Performers are reminded that there is an expectation that they will undertake appropriate and necessary investigations to look for signs and symptoms of abnormalities within the GOS fee.

If abnormalities have been detected, it should be made clear to GOS patients that they have an option of referral to a hospital where these tests may be carried out for free, rather than paying for additional tests within the practice. GOS patients should not be made to feel that additional charges are mandatory nor that they are receiving less than a professional or competent examination if they opt out of 'top up'.

Performers are also reminded that they are ultimately responsible for undertaking all clinically necessary tests to look for signs or symptoms of abnormality. Many providers use 'pre-screening' tests sometimes carried out by non-professional members of staff. If pre-screening tests suggest abnormal readings, the performer has a duty to ensure that they are accurate and reasonable before advising referral.

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## Equal access to appointments during GOS hours

Part 9 of the GOS contract states that there should be equal access to appointments during GOS hours. Please see clause 39 below.

*39. The Contractor shall only refuse to provide services under the Contract to an eligible person if it has reasonable grounds for doing so, and those grounds cannot relate to a person's—*

*39.1. race, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, disability or medical or ophthalmic condition; or*

*39.2. decision or intended decision to accept or refuse private services in respect of himself or a family member.*

Please ensure that all patient groups are entitled to an NHS sight test during GOS hours unless there are grounds to refuse the service under clause 40. You may not limit the number of GOS appointments available to eligible patients in any session nor restrict access at certain times on grounds of age (eg children on Saturday mornings). There is no lower age limit for access to GOS sight tests and to refuse to see children on grounds of age is inappropriate.

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## Patient direct referrals

Part 8 of the GOS contract states that direct referrals can be made to ophthalmic hospital, which includes an ophthalmic department of hospital. Please see clause 31 below.

31. Where the Contractor or an *ophthalmic practitioner* employed or engaged by it to perform the Contract is of the opinion that a patient whose sight has been tested pursuant to clause 30—
- 31.1. shows on examination signs of injury, disease or abnormality in the eye or elsewhere which may require medical treatment; or
  - 31.2. is not likely to attain a satisfactory standard of vision notwithstanding the application of corrective lenses,
- it shall, if appropriate, and with the consent of the patient—
- 31.3. refer the patient to an ophthalmic hospital, which includes an ophthalmic department of a hospital,
  - 31.4. inform the patient's doctor or GP practice that it has done so, and
  - 31.5. give the patient a written statement that it has done so, with details of the referral.

Information regarding referrals in the Hampshire & Isle of Wight area can be found on the Hampshire LOC website <http://hampshireloc.org.uk/referral-guidelines/>

Information regarding referrals in the Dorset area can be found on the Dorset LOC website <https://dorsetloc.org/ophthalmology-wet-amd-referrals>  
<https://dorsetloc.org/news?s=dch-referrals>

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## Contact Sheet

Attached is an up to date contact sheet. This has all the information required to enable you to contact the correct team when you have any queries. Please ensure that you keep a copy of the contact sheet handy and share this with your colleagues.

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## NHS England Policies

The NHS England policies that relate to optometry can be found at:  
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/primary-care/optometry/>

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