

OFNC

Association of British Dispensing Opticians
Association of Optometrists
British Medical Association
Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians

Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee

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Chair: Paul Carroll

Secretary: Tony Stafford

COVID-19 – SUPPORT FOR GOS CONTRACTORS IN ENGLAND

The Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee (OFNC) and its members (ABDO, AOP, BMA and FODO) are working closely with NHS England on supporting GOS contractors in England through the coronavirus crisis. NHS England has confirmed that eye care is an essential part of the NHS and primary care service, both of itself and in keeping pressure off other NHS services such as GPs and A&E. NHS England's aim is to keep essential eye care operating as far as possible to ensure essential and urgent eye health needs are met whilst protecting patients, staff and the public.

Issues that the OFNC and NHS England are urgently working on with the aim of supporting optical practices in England, include:

- The financial implications for practices of a downturn in GOS fee income because of the crisis
- More flexibility around GOS contractual requirements, to help practices and domiciliary providers give patients the care they need as quickly and safely as possible, and to support practices who may not have the staff available to provide services, due to illness or self-isolation
- Guidance to help patients, optical practices and other parts of the NHS understand the GOS services that optical practices in England will continue to provide during the crisis and to direct patients to them
- How the whole sector can work together to mobilise new services in optical practices as quickly as possible, to meet essential and urgent eye care needs during the crisis and reduce demand on GP and hospital services.

OFNC and its member bodies are working very closely with LOCSU, which is co-ordinating the sector-wide work on new services, and with the General Optical Council, College of Optometrists, Optometry Wales, Optometry Scotland and Optometry Northern Ireland and government to streamline communications and provide evidence-based advice to the front-line throughout this crisis.

We and the NHS in all countries thank you for your support to the population at this difficult time. We will share more information about these measures as soon as we can.

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