

COVID Update April 10th 2020[View this email in your browser](#)

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Update NHSE of Your Opening

Can all practices who are remaining open please ensure that NHSE are aware you are open for business. Email: England.optometryeast@nhs.net

Open is defined as (and this is NOT flexible), the normal contracted hours ie the hours your contract states you are available to provide services. Where there IS flexibility though is that your front door does not have to be open all those hours and you do not have to be in those four walls!

All routine optical services are suspended until advised otherwise. The definition of a routine service is when the patient is not complaining of any new symptoms or loss of sight. Only essential and emergency service should currently be offered. A lot of these services can be remote – telephone, video etc. SO these services can be delivered from a variety of different environments, not just the practice. You have to be AVAILABLE to your patients by some means, but the delivery of these has some flexibility ie you can offer telemeds during contracted hours. You can see patients face to face by appointment during your normal contracted hours. Patients must know how to contact you during normal contracted hour such as by telephone if your door is locked.

Urgent or essential eye care?

- Essential eye care is currently delivered under your General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) contract. This includes but is not limited to appointments for patients who would not normally be considered to be emergencies, but where, in the practitioner's professional judgement, a delay in an examination may be detrimental to a patient's sight or wellbeing. This may include where patients have broken or lost their glasses or contact lenses and need a replacement pair to function.
- Urgent or emergency eye care where a contract is held with a CCG to deliver urgent clinical advice or intervention (MECS) e.g. for red eye, contact lens discomfort, foreign object, sudden change in vision, flashes and floaters which might suggest detachment etc., or where the patient has been advised to attend a practice by NHS 111 or another healthcare professional for urgent eye care.

Update from NHSE

The Officers of the LOC are attending numerous webinar updates from

NHSE/AOP/LOCSU Please find the latest from NHSE from a webinar on 8th April 2020 here: <http://essex-loc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NHSE-Update-080420.pdf>

PPE

Advice and guidance is regularly changing for PPE. We have a protocol on the LOC Website which you may want to read as part of your update: <http://essex-loc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Protocols-Infection-control-Hygiene-and-PPE.pdf> Further up to date guidance is on the College and the AOP website. Any practitioner who is undertaking a face to face consultation needs some PPE.

Update from AOP

AOP are running webinars on a regular basis, members should hear about these via the normal email routes.

Face Shields

The LOC has been able to source and purchase a limited number of face shields. These are due for delivery next week. They will be collected by some committee members and individual practices will be able to collect from these committee members. If you would like a face shield, one per practice, then please email Katie on enquiries@essex-loc.org You will need to tell her the Contractor's name, the practice address and the name of the person who will collect the shield. Please inform Katie by 17th April 2020.

Recording Your Consultations

More details are available on the AOP website. Ensure you regularly review this for documents and guidance. The following are tips for those people you see:

- Ensure you take full notes for all consultations, even if a visit over the phone.
- Do not record phone calls or video consultations.
- AOP will be producing remote consultation record cards, these have more detailed triage options.
- Consider backing up advice issued verbally in writing. Beware sending patient identifiable data by email.

Private Consultations at BMI

BMI have asked us to let you know that they have one Consultant, Mr Chandra, who is willing to see private patients by telemedicine at this time. Should there be any need/requests please contact his private secretary on 07926 008140.



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