

NHSmail Guide for LOC's

(Thanks to Norfolk LOC and LOCSU)

Introduction

NHSmail is the national secure collaboration service for health and social care. For optometry, it is a secure and effective way of sharing sensitive and confidential patient data by ensuring compliance with data protection regulations and facilities secure communication with other professionals in health and social care.

This guide provides step-by-step instructions for most queries related to obtaining, maintaining, and troubleshooting NHSmail accounts for General Optical Services (GOS) contractors and optometrist.

Mailboxes

When signed up to NHSmail, optical practices will be provided with a shared mailbox and up to three individual user accounts per site.

The shared mailbox is an email account that multiple authorised users within a practice can access. Unlike individual email accounts, it does not have a separate password and is accessed through users individual NHSmail accounts.

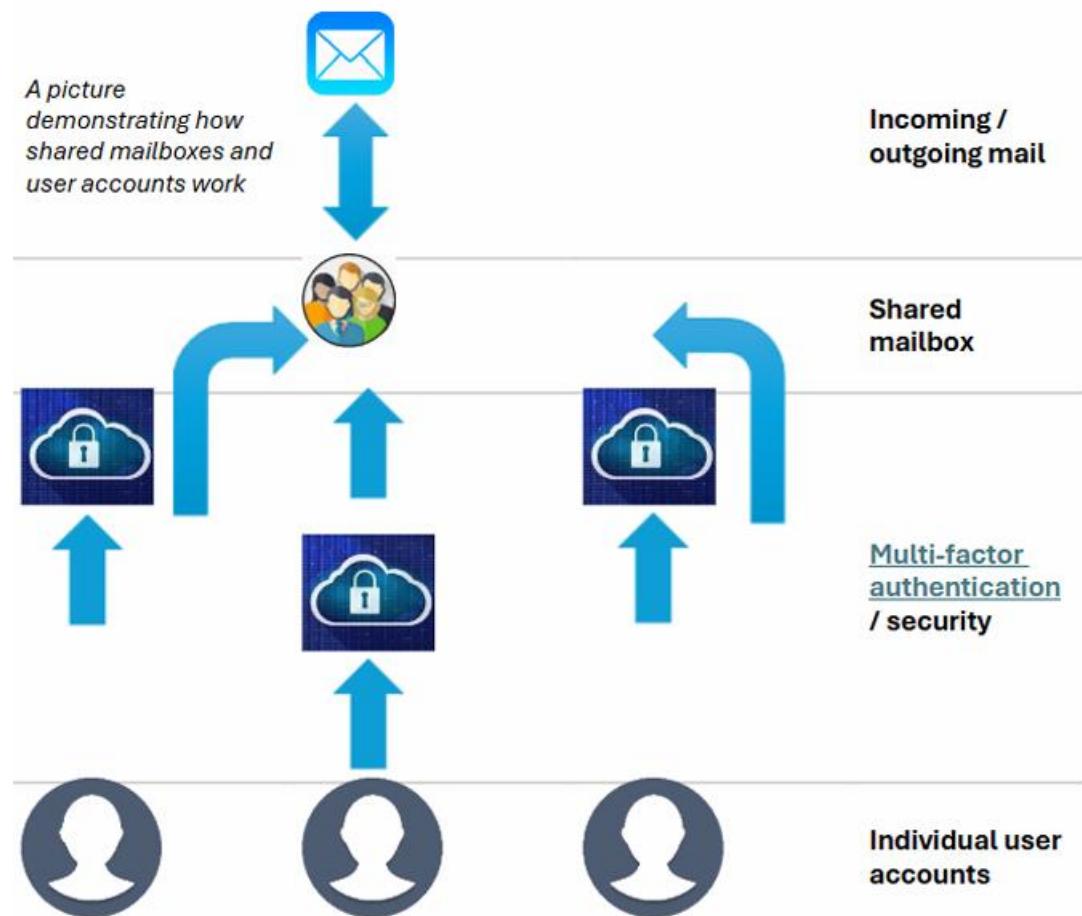
Key features of a shared mailbox:

- Multiple user access – up to 3 users per practice can be assigned access
- No direct login – users access this mailbox through their own NHSmail accounts
- All authorised users can send and view emails on behalf of the shared mailbox, e.g. referrals, patient communications, and other shared practice data
- Secure and compliant – Ensures NHS standard data security when dealing with sensitive information
- Maintains a central email inbox for referrals, admin tasks, and other types of practice related sensitive communications

An individual user account is a personal, secure email account assigned to a specific individual (clinical or non-clinical) within an approved organisation. This allows users to send and receive confidential emails.

Key features:

- Each user has their own unique NHS email address
- Compliant with GDPR and NHS security standards when dealing with sensitive data
- Users can be granted permission to shared mailboxes in any practice they work at
- Allows safe, quick, and efficient way of sending patient referrals and data



Applying for NHS mail

All GOS contractors, and their optometrists and dispensing opticians, in England can apply for NHSmail, as long as they operate 10 or fewer sites. When signed up, they will be provided with a shared mailbox and up to three individual user accounts per site.

If you do not have an NHSmail account, follow the steps below to apply:

GOS Contractors

Ensure Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT) compliance:

- Complete your annual [Data Security and Protection Toolkit](#) self-assessment:
 - To obtain an NHSmail account, this is an NHS mandated self-assessment undertaken annually to demonstrate proper and legal handling of patient data.
 - DSPT ensures compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR, and NHS cyber security policies.
 - This can be done directly on the [DSPT Portal](#)
 - It can also be completed via <https://www.qualityinoptometry.co.uk/>
 - Help to complete can be found here <https://help.optom-referrals.org/article/303-gio-tutorial-optical-dspt-checklist>
 - This confirms compliance with GDPR, Data Protection Act, and cyber security standards.

- Make sure you have your **ODS code** ([Find your ODS code](#))
- Ensure you have an authentication code – this can be obtained from NHS BSA via this email nhsbsa-paos-support@nhs.net.

Registration Process:

- Apply through the NHSmail registration portal: [NHSmail Registration](#).
- Provide practice details, including your ODS code.
- Submit the application as per the portal's instructions.

Account set up:

- Each practice will receive a shared mailbox accessible by multiple staff members.
- Up to three individual user accounts per site can be created, allowing staff to access the shared mailbox and send emails on behalf of the practice.
- It is recommended that you use one of these accounts as an 'admin' or 'locum' account to allow temporary staff or locum individuals access to the shared mailbox when working on site.

Locum Optometrist

1. Apply for an NHSmail account via an optometry practice frequently worked at:
 - The optometry site you work with most frequently can [request an NHSmail account on your behalf](#).
 - The practice's shared mailbox owner should submit a request to the NHSmail helpdesk (helpdesk@nhs.net) from the site's shared mailbox.
 - The locum's new individual NHSmail account will be linked to the practice's shared mailbox, allowing them to send referrals securely.
 - If the locum stops working at the practice, the account can then be transferred to a new place of work.
2. Use a locum specific / admin shared NHSmail account at the practice:
 - This would allow a locum temporary access to the practice's shared mailbox without needing their own NHSmail account.
 - The practice's NHSmail administrator can provide this when the locum is working there.
3. Alternative secure communications – Egress ([Request Egress Invitation](#)):
 - This is the only secure email encryption service, approved by NHSE, and complies with all data protection laws and regulations.
 - Emails are securely received by NHSmail users without the need for additional software or integration tools.
 - Clinicians are able to use Egress with their personal email accounts whilst ensuring messages are encrypted and therefore secure.
 - DSPT does not have to be completed to apply for, or have an Egress account.
 - **Please note: Egress is also a solution for practices with more than 10 sites or for non-GOS practices.**

Due to the increased number of scam and phishing attacks, it is strongly advised that all NHSmail users set up Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) on their accounts. Instructions for this can be found [here](#).

Existing NHSmail account

To maintain the security and functionality of your NHSmail account, adhere to the following guidelines:

a. Use/access regularly:

- Keep your NHSmail account active by doing one of the following at least once every 30 days:
 - Logging into the NHSmail portal
 - Log into O365 application
 - Access via other platforms like Outlook
 - Send an email

b. Inactivity Protocol:

- **30-Day Inactivity:** Accounts not accessed for 30 days will be marked as inactive.
- **60-Day Inactivity:** If still inactive after 60 days, the account will be deleted.
- **Restoration Window:** Deleted accounts can be restored within 30 days post-deletion; beyond this period, a new application is required.
 - To restore an account, the shared mailbox owner must email NAS from the shared mailbox address (or your local administrator if applicable - depending on how your account was originally set up).
 - They must provide the deleted email address and deleted user's mobile number.

Support and assistance

For any issues or inquiries related to NHSemail	Email: helpdesk@nhs.net Phone: 0333 200 1133
National Administration Service (NAS): For account – related requests and support	Email: helpdesk@nhs.net
If you are unsure who provided / commissioned your existing NHSmail account	Email: nhsbsa.paos-support@nhs.net
If you are not sure whether you already have an NHSmail account or if it is still active	Do not apply for a new one. Email nhsbsa.paos-support@nhs.net who will be able to support you with this TIP: Before you find yourself in this situation, please follow advice in this guide to note down who your administrator is!

<p>For forgotten or lost passwords: If you do not have a user account secret set:</p>	Call 0333 200 1133, choose option 1, and then option 1 again - password reset guide
<p>If you do have a user account secret, mobile number or other authentication set up:</p>	The shared mailbox owner will need to contact the NAS to reset
<p>Additional Resources: Guides and FAQs are available on the NHSmail support site</p>	NHSmail Support NHSmail FAQs , includes general FAQs including resetting password