

Dear Colleague

**GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES (GOS) –
COVID-19: Further important information for community eye
care providers**

Summary

1. This communication provides details of a number of important COVID-19 updates for community eye care providers in Scotland, including: the continuation of financial support for community optometry; emergency dispensing and the submission of claims; coding accuracy in respect of emergency or essential eye care; an amendment to eSchedules; an update to the Community Eye Care website.

Action

2. NHS Boards are asked to **urgently** issue this letter and the enclosed Memorandum to all optometrists, ophthalmic medical practitioners and practices within their Board area.

Yours sincerely,



Heather Campbell

Interim Deputy Director of Primary Care,
Scottish Government

21 May 2020

Addresses:

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards

For information

Chief Executive,
NHS National Services
Scotland

NHS Board Optometric
Advisers

NHS Education for Scotland

Optometry Scotland

Enquiries to:

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**MEMORANDUM TO NHS:
PCA(O)2020(8)**

Summary

1. This Memorandum provides a further important update to all community optometry practices and staff regarding the provision of emergency and essential eye care services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. It includes information on:
 - The continuation of financial support for community optometry;
 - Emergency dispensing and the submission of claims;
 - Coding accuracy in respect of emergency or essential eye care;
 - eSchedules, with regard to the Remittance Breakdown (Account 14) report;
 - An update to the Community Eye Care website.

The Continuation of Financial Support for Community Optometry

3. Community optometry practices and staff are key to the delivery of eye care in Scotland and to the reform agenda in the longer term. It is imperative therefore that, as far as possible, the current infrastructure and workforce are protected.
4. In order to do this, [PCA\(O\)2020\(4\)](#) set out the two part financial support package intended to assist practices at the current time.
5. As we move towards the commencement of the recovery phase for community optometry, the Scottish Government remains committed to the provision of financial support. We will work to ensure that the recovery plan prioritises the safety of patients and practice staff, and that this is underpinned by an appropriate model for the provision of financial support to practices. Further information regarding recovery, and financial support, will be available in due course.

Emergency Dispensing and the Submission of Claims

6. As set out in [PCA\(O\)2020\(5\)](#) and further outlined in more detail in [PCA\(O\)2020\(7\)](#), emergency dispensing should **only** take place in instances where delaying the provision of spectacles would be detrimental to a patient's sight or wellbeing, or where key workers have lost or broken their spectacles.
7. Provision for emergency dispensing has been built into the financial support package currently received by practices. In calculating the Part 1 average monthly item of service income payment for each practice, historical remuneration levels associated with GOS(S)1, GOS(S)3 and GOS(S)4 claim types were utilised.

8. Practices are therefore receiving financial support related to dispensing that is based on historic GOS(S)3 and GOS(S)4 activity levels applicable to the months March paid April 2019 through to and including February paid March 2020. This is in contrast to current practice where dispensing is only permitted in restricted circumstances.
9. The level of support is therefore more than sufficient to provide remuneration for the volume of dispensing activity currently being delivered. As such, there are no plans to review this at the current time.
10. When carrying out emergency dispensing for which vouchers are applicable, practitioners are reminded that they **must** submit a claim via eOphthalmic without delay. In doing so, this will ensure that the patient history within the GOS payment system is maintained, that activity levels in relation to dispensing may be monitored, and that data is available to the Scottish Government in order to inform recovery planning.

Coding Accuracy in respect of Emergency or Essential Eye Care

11. In line with wider guidance on social distancing to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, all providers of GOS in Scotland were instructed to cease the provision of routine eye care services from Monday 23 March 2020 until further notice. At this point, community eye care service provision changed to support patients in need of emergency or essential eye care only.
12. In line with paragraphs 19 and 20 of [PCA\(O\)2020\(4\)](#), practices who have provided emergency or essential eye care are permitted to claim via eOphthalmic.
13. Therefore, with the exception of claims relating to emergency dispensing, the only other item of service claims that practitioners may submit at the current time are supplementary eye examination (SEE) reason codes 2.8 or 4.8.
14. Practitioners are therefore advised to ensure that any claim they submit in respect of emergency or essential eye care is made in line with these SEE reason codes. In doing so, practices will ensure that they are appropriately remunerated for the service they have provided, and that accurate data is available to the Scottish Government to inform recovery planning.

eSchedules – Remittance Breakdown (Account 14) Report

15. Practitioner Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland have prioritised an enhancement to eSchedules, which will provide practices with enhanced information relation to COVID-19 financial support payments.
16. The Remittance Breakdown (Account 14) report will be amended to provide enhanced data in respect of “13. Miscellaneous Adjustments”. Practices will now be able to identify the figure attributable to each element of financial support, which have been referenced “COVID-19 FSP” and “COVID-19 emergency payments”, within this line of the report.

17. The amended report is available to practices to view with effect from the April paid May 2020 schedule. In addition, it is also possible to view this data for the March paid April 2020 schedule.
18. Any queries relating to this amendment should be directed to the Ophthalmic Helpdesk via email to nss.psdophthalmic@nhs.net or via telephone on 0131 275 6200. Queries that relate specifically to COVID payments should be submitted via email to nss.psdgospayments-covid19@nhs.net.

Update to the Community Eye Care Website

19. The Community Eye Care website had been updated with COVID-19 emergency response clinical guidance for every condition. This information has been provided following discussion with EyeHealth Scotland, NHS Board Optometric Advisors and Optometry Scotland. The website can be accessed via the following link: <https://communityeyecare.scot.nhs.uk/>.

Enquiries

20. Any enquiries arising from this Memorandum should be emailed to: eyecare@gov.scot.

Primary Care Division,
Directorate for Community Health and Social Care
Scottish Government