



Dear Colleague

GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES (GOS):

- **REMINDER ABOUT DEADLINE DATES FOR PRACTICES ORDERING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) VIA THE PECOS SYSTEM**
- **CHANGE TO GOS(S)1 FINANCIAL SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY OPTOMETRY PRACTICE PREMISES;**
- **UPDATED PUBLIC HEALTH SCOTLAND GUIDANCE ON INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL FOR PRIMARY CARE.**

Summary

1. This letter advises on the following:

- A reminder about the necessity for practices ordering PPE via the PECOS system to do so by the deadline date;
- A change to GOS(S)1 financial support arrangements for community optometry practice premises;
- Updated Public Health Scotland guidance on infection prevention and control for primary care.

Action

2. NHS Boards are asked to urgently copy and issue the Memorandum to this letter to all optometrists, ophthalmic medical practitioners, body corporates and practices on their ophthalmic lists.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Ferris
Deputy Director

12 February 2021

Addresses

For action
Chief Executives, NHS Boards

For information
Chief Executive,
NHS National Services
Scotland

NHS Board Optometric
Advisers

NHS Education for Scotland

Enquiries to:

nss.psdgospayments-covid19@nhs.scot (for any practice-specific queries about the financial support measures)

eyecare@gov.scot (for any other queries)

**MEMORANDUM TO NHS:
PCA(O)2021(4)**

Summary

1. This Memorandum advises on the following:

- A reminder about the necessity for practices ordering Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) via the PECOS system to do so by the deadline date;
- A change to GOS(S)1 financial support arrangements for community optometry practice premises;
- Updated Public Health Scotland guidance on infection prevention and control (IPC) for primary care.

Deadline dates for practices ordering PPE via the PECOS system

2. As detailed in [PCA\(O\)2021\(2\)](#), practices in phase 1 of the transition to the 'pull' PPE ordering model are now in receipt of information from NHS NSS National Procurement detailing how to log in to PECOS and order PPE. This was sent via email to the practice nhs.scot email account on 25/26 January 2021.
3. Within this information were the cut-off dates for PECOS orders covering the period January – March 2021. Practices are reminded that orders must be received by **midday** on the date of cut-off, in order to ensure delivery within the following 10 days.
4. If a practice who identifies that they require PPE fails to place an order by the cut-off date, any subsequent order they place will not be processed until the following cut-off date four weeks later. This may put pressure on supplies of PPE held locally within practices, therefore it is recommended that processes are implemented to ensure that cut-off dates are known, that the review of PPE stock levels is carried out in conjunction with anticipated levels of demand for eye examinations, and that orders are placed in a timeous manner.
5. Further information for practices in phases 2 and 3 of the transition to 'pull' will be communicated in due course.

Change to GOS(S)1 financial support arrangements for practice premises

6. [PCA\(O\)2020\(19\)](#) implemented changes to the GOS(S)1 financial support arrangements for practice premises, whereby a 20% minimum level of activity was required to be achieved in order for a practice to be eligible to receive financial support.

7. In making these changes, the Scottish Government recognised that there may be instances where a practice was unable to achieve the minimum activity level as a direct result of COVID, and thus provision was made for practices who anticipated that this may apply to them to pro-actively discuss their individual circumstances with their NHS Board, and a decision be reached as to whether the “top-up” would be paid.
8. These changes came into force with effect from 1 December 2020.
9. As set out in paragraph 10 of [PCA\(O\)2021\(1\)](#), the minimum monthly GOS(S)1 activity level for practice premises (relative to the average monthly GOS(S)1 item of service income across the 2019/20 financial year) required to be met in order to automatically qualify for a “top-up” payment in line with [PCA\(O\)2020\(14\)](#) will be kept at 20% for the [January 2021 \(paid February 2021\) payment schedule](#) period, and not increased to 40% as had originally been stated in [PCA\(O\)2020\(19\)](#).
10. Following feedback from the optical sector about the impact on patient demand for eye examinations following the [‘lockdown’ regulations](#) that came into effect on 5 January 2021 in all Level 4 areas in Scotland, the Scottish Government is introducing an **additional** safety measure for financial support for practice premises with effect from the January 2021 (paid February 2021) payment schedule operated by Practitioner and Counter Fraud Services (P&CFS). This additional measure will operation in conjunction with the arrangements described in paragraph 7 above.
11. Under the additional measure being introduced, a practice premises with a GOS(S)1 activity level in the January 2021 payment schedule of less than 20% but greater than or equal to 15% will **automatically** be brought to the attention of their local NHS Board by P&CFS. The Board will review the data provided to them, in conjunction with other local intelligence that it may possess, to determine whether, in its view, a GOS(S)1 “top-up” payment should be made to the practice on the basis that there are COVID-19 specific circumstances for the activity level achieved.
12. The specific circumstances **must** be directly related to COVID-19 and be beyond the practice owner’s control (e.g. if patient demand for GOS eye examinations has reduced following the current ‘lockdown’ regulations).
13. A “top-up” payment must not be made where the specific circumstances have occurred solely or partly because the practice owner has made their own decision to restrict the range of the services provided by the practice, such as by not providing routine GOS eye examinations.
14. Where a local NHS Board reaches a determination that the “top-up” should be paid, they must notify P&CFS accordingly, stating the reason(s) for their decision.

15. If P&CFS receive this notification by noon on 17 February 2021, the practice premises concerned will receive its GOS(S)1 “top-up” payment in the January 2021 (paid February 2021) schedule that is due to be paid to practices on 24 February 2021.
16. If P&CFS receive this notification after noon on 17 February 2021, the practice premises concerned will receive its GOS(S)1 “top-up” payment for the January 2021 (paid February 2021) schedule period in the [February 2021 \(paid March 2021\) schedule](#) that is due to be paid to practices on 24 March 2021. The practice will still receive payment in the January 2021 (paid February 2021) schedule for actual GOS(S)1 claim activity submitted by the eOphthalmic claim cut-off date of 5pm on 10 February 2021.
17. **In order to support this new process, it is imperative that practice premises continue to notify their local NHS Board as soon as possible if they are concerned that the practice’s GOS(S)1 activity will fall below the minimum threshold.**
18. The process set out in paragraphs 11 to 17 above will not be applied retrospectively for practice premises whose submitted GOS(S)1 activity in the [December 2020 \(paid January 2021\) payment schedule](#) was less than 20%, and thus did not receive a GOS(S)1 “top-up” payment.
19. Any future adjustments by the Scottish Government to the minimum GOS(S)1 activity threshold (and therefore to the percentages that apply to the discretionary “top-up” process) will be communicated at the appropriate point in a PCA circular.

Updated Public Health Scotland guidance on IPC for primary care

20. Public Health Scotland has updated its IPC guidance for primary care (community optometry is covered in section 12):
<https://hps-beta.azurewebsites.net/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-primary-care/>.
21. The main changes applied are to provide appropriate links to the new ‘Scottish COVID-19 Community Health and Care Settings IPC addendum’ that was published in early January:
<http://www.nipcm.hps.scot.nhs.uk/scottish-covid-19-community-health-and-care-settings-infection-prevention-and-control-addendum/#a2785>.
22. For the avoidance of doubt, services provided by the community optometry sector are considered to fall within the ‘Medium Risk’ pathway described in the ‘IPC addendum’ guidance as confirmed or suspected COVID-19 symptomatic patients should be identified during the pre-appointment screening process.

Enquiries

23. Any practice-specific queries about the financial support measures should be emailed to Practitioner and Counter Fraud Services at: nss.psdgospayments-covid19@nhs.scot.
24. Any other queries about this Memorandum should be emailed to the Scottish Government at: eyecare@gov.scot.

Dentistry and Optometry Division
Directorate of Primary Care
Scottish Government