

Directorate of Primary Care
Dentistry and Optometry Division



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Dear Colleague

GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES (GOS):

- **Update on opening hours for practice premises;**
- **Update on financial support for practice premises and mobile practices.**

Summary

1. This letter advises on the following:

- An update on opening hours for practice premises;
- An update to financial support for community optometry practice premises and mobile practices.

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,

Aidan Grisewood
Director of Primary Care

29 April 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(06)**

Summary

1. This Memorandum advises on the following:

- An update on opening hours for practice premises;
- An update on financial support for community optometry practice premises and mobile practices.

Update on opening hours for practice premises

2. Overall eye examination activity levels within practice premises for the month of March 2021 have increased to approximately 90% of the level seen in March 2019, which represents an increase of approximately 20% from the activity level seen in January 2021.
3. Activity rates at an individual practice level continue to vary greatly, however a significant number of practice premises are now exceeding the level of eye examination throughput displayed in equivalent months in preceding years. In many cases, this has been achieved via the implementation of new ways of working and the extension of opening hours.
4. Contractors who have extended their opening hours, and who expect these changes to be in place for the foreseeable future, **must** communicate this to the NHS Board on whose Ophthalmic List they appear. This is in line with the requirements of the National Health Service (General Ophthalmic Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2006, and is important because it is used to inform other work, including the information on practice opening times held on [NHS Inform](#).
5. In addition, practice premises that temporarily reduced their opening hours as a result of the pandemic, are expected to have now returned to pre-pandemic opening hours. However, where a practice premises has permanently reduced their opening hours, they **must** communicate this to the NHS Board on whose Ophthalmic List they appear.

Update on financial support for practice premises

6. With effect from Saturday 1 May 2021, the minimum 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 qualify for a 'top-up' payment in line with [PCA\(O\)2020\(14\)](#) will remain at 50%.
7. The safety measure for financial support for practice premises detailed in paragraphs 11 to 17 of [PCA\(O\)2021\(04\)](#) will remain in place. For the May (paid June) 2021 payment schedule, the GOS(S)1 activity level at which a practice premises will automatically be brought to the attention of their local NHS Board by

Practitioner & Counter Fraud Services (P&CFS) will remain at less than 50%, but greater than or equal to 45%.

8. If a practice premises has to close as a result of COVID-19, the Scottish Government will continue to make financial support available. In this instance, the arrangements detailed in paragraphs 10 to 14 of [PCA\(O\)2020\(19\)](#) will continue to provide a mechanism for the practice to discuss the situation with the local NHS Board.
9. A review of the financial support model for practice premises from 1 June 2021 onwards will be undertaken once the GOS(S)1 activity data for the April (paid May) 2021 schedule is available. The Scottish Government anticipates being in a position in late May 2021 to set out a timeline for the transition out of the current financial support model for practice premises.

Update on financial support for mobile practices

10. With effect from Saturday 1 May 2021, the minimum GOS(S)1 activity level for mobile practices (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 qualify for a 'top-up' payment in line with [PCA\(O\)2020\(14\)](#) will remain at 20%.
11. The safety measure for financial support for mobile practices detailed in paragraph 21 of [PCA\(O\)2021\(5\)](#) will remain in place. For the May (paid June) 2021 payment schedule, the GOS(S)1 activity level at which a mobile practice will automatically be brought to the attention of their local NHS Board by P&CFS will remain at less than 20%, but greater than or equal to 15%.
12. It is recognised that there may be instances where a mobile provider is unable to meet the minimum activity level as a direct result of COVID-19. Therefore, the arrangements detailed in paragraphs 23 to 26 of [PCA\(O\)2021\(05\)](#) will continue to provide a mechanism for a mobile provider to discuss the situation with the local NHS Board.
13. Further adjustments to the model of financial support for mobile practices as it applies from 1 June 2021 will be communicated in due course.

Enquiries

14. Any practice-specific queries about the financial support measures should be emailed to P&CFS at: nss.psdgospayments-covid19@nhs.scot.
15. Any other queries about this Memorandum should be emailed to the Scottish Government at: eyecare@gov.scot.

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