



Dear Colleague

GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES (GOS):

- **New physical distancing requirements in health and social care settings**
- **New guidance regarding isolation exemptions for health and social care staff**
- **Clarification regarding wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 contact tracing**
- **Staff wellbeing support**
- **31 October 2021 mandatory training deadline for all GOS practitioners**

Summary

1. This letter advises on the following:

- new physical distancing requirements in health and social care settings;
- new guidance regarding isolation exemptions for health and social care staff;
- clarification regarding wearing of PPE and COVID-19 contact tracing;
- a reminder about staff wellbeing support available through the National Wellbeing Hub;
- a reminder to all optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners providing GOS about the 31 October 2021 deadline for completing the 2021 GOS mandatory training.

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

1 September 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:

eyecare@gov.scot

**MEMORANDUM TO NHS:
PCA(O)2021(10)**

Summary

1. This Memorandum advises on the following:

- new physical distancing requirements in health and social care settings;
- new guidance regarding isolation exemptions for health and social care staff;
- clarification regarding wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 contact tracing;
- a reminder about staff wellbeing support available through the National Wellbeing Hub;
- a reminder to all optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners (OMP) providing General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) about the 31 October 2021 deadline for completing the 2021 GOS mandatory training.

New physical distancing requirements in health and social care settings

2. New physical distancing requirements for health and social care settings in Scotland have been introduced with immediate effect, and are set out in [DL\(2021\)28](#) and section 7.15 of the [IPC Addendum guidance](#) for community health and care settings.
3. Under the new requirements, physical distancing in health and care settings (including community optometry practices) can be reduced in some areas from 2 metres to 1 metre, with exceptions as set out in the guidance. Practices are required to familiarise themselves with both the DL document and IPC Addendum guidance before making any changes in their practice.

New guidance regarding isolation exemptions for health and social care staff

4. New guidance on isolation exemptions for health and social care staff in Scotland are set out in [DL\(2021\)24](#), and enables staff who are household contacts of a person with COVID-19 to return to work subject to certain conditions.

Clarification regarding PPE wearing and COVID-19 contact tracing

5. As set out in paragraph 5 of [PCA\(O\)2021\(08\)](#) and section 7.5.2 of the [IPC Addendum guidance](#) for community health and care settings, community optometry practice staff are reminded that use of gloves and aprons should be risk assessed and **only** worn when exposure to blood and body fluids is anticipated.
6. For the avoidance of doubt, practice staff wearing only a Fluid Resistant Surgical Mask (Type IIR) in accordance with section 7.5 of the IPC Addendum guidance will routinely not be identified as a close contact of a patient who subsequently tests positive for COVID-19.

Staff wellbeing

7. All community optometry practice staff are reminded that a range of support to help with their wellbeing is available through the National Wellbeing Hub. Further information is available via the [National Wellbeing Hub](#) website, and set out in paragraphs 8 to 11 of [PCA\(O\)2021\(08\)](#).

Reminder about mandatory training for GOS practitioners

8. Optometrists and OMPs are reminded that, in order to remain on a NHS Board's Ophthalmic List to provide GOS in Scotland, there is a legal requirement under [paragraph 3A of Schedule 1 of the National Health Service \(General Ophthalmic Services\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2006](#), as amended, to satisfactorily complete mandatory training provided by NHS Education for Scotland.
9. The 2021 mandatory training takes the form of an online TURAS Learn module on "Developing Personal Leadership in Optometric Practice". This can be accessed at: <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/40769/optometry/online-cpd/mandatory-training-2021-developing-personal-leadership-in-optometric-practice>. One CET point will be awarded upon satisfactory completion of this module.
10. The deadline for completing the mandatory training is **Sunday 31 October 2021**.
11. Further information is available via the Frequently Asked Questions document: <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/40868/optometry/gos-mandatory-training/mandatory-training-2021-faqs>.

Enquiries

12. Any 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