

**Directorate for Primary Care**

Dentistry, Optometry and Community Hearing  
Division



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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Dear Colleague

**Primary Care Optometry:**

- **Patient signposting during festive period**
- **Guidance to support discussions with patients regarding cataract surgery referrals**
- **Microsoft 365 licences and NHS email accounts**
- **Community Glaucoma Service (CGS) remuneration uplifts**
- **List of active CGS practice locations**

**Summary**

1. This letter advises on:
  - A reminder about the importance of appropriate patient signposting being in place for practices that will be closed over the festive period;
  - Publication of guidance to support community optometrists when discussing cataract surgery referrals with patients;
  - A reminder about Microsoft 365 licences and NHS email accounts;
  - Clarification on the backdating of CGS remuneration uplifts;
  - Publication of a list of active CGS practice locations.

**Action**

2. Health Boards are asked to immediately copy and issue the Memorandum to this letter to all:
  - optometrists, ophthalmic medical practitioners and body corporates on their Ophthalmic Lists;
  - community optometry practices in their Health Board area;
  - Hospital Eye Service (HES) manager(s) in their Health Board, for onward distribution to relevant HES colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

**Tom Ferris**

**Deputy Director**  
**Dentistry, Optometry and Community Hearing Division**

19 December 2024

**Addresses**

For action

Chief Executives, Health  
Boards

For information

Chief Executive,  
NHS National Services  
Scotland

Health Board Optometric  
Advisers

**Enquiries to:**

[nss.psdgospayteam@nhs.scot](mailto:nss.psdgospayteam@nhs.scot)

(for queries about backdated  
CGS payments)

[eyecare@gov.scot](mailto:eyecare@gov.scot)

(for all other queries)

**MEMORANDUM TO NHS:  
PCA(O)2024(07)**

**Summary**

1. This Memorandum advises on the following:
  - A reminder about the importance of appropriate patient signposting being in place for practices that will be closed over the festive period;
  - Publication of guidance to support community optometrists when discussing cataract surgery referrals with patients;
  - A reminder about Microsoft 365 licences and NHS email accounts;
  - Clarification on the backdating of Community Glaucoma Service (CGS) remuneration uplifts;
  - Publication of a list of active CGS practice locations.
2. Where this Memorandum has been received by an optometry practice via their NHS email account, it should be shared with all relevant practice staff.

**Patient signposting during festive period**

3. Community optometry practices that will be closed over the festive holiday period (and on any other public holidays) are reminded about the importance of having appropriate messaging in place (e.g. on the practice's door, windows, telephone messaging system and website) for patients contacting the practice with an emergency eye problem.
4. This messaging should normally be to visit NHS Inform or phone NHS24 on 111.

**Guidance to support community optometrists when discussing cataract surgery referrals with patients**

5. Guidance has been developed by NHS Scotland, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to support community optometrists when referring a patient to secondary care for cataract surgery, and can be used to structure the supplementary eye examination reason code 2.9 appointment ('Cataract Referral Advice and Counselling'). Ideally, the patient will already have received an information leaflet about cataract surgery prior to this appointment.
6. This guidance can be found via the new Supplementary Eye Examination page on the [eyes.nhs.scot](https://eyes.nhs.scot) website.

7. It is not mandatory to use this form, as practitioners may have alternative ways of recording their discussion with the patient and any advice given. However, the [College of Optometrists Guidance for Professional Practice](#) on keeping full and accurate records should be noted.

### **Microsoft 365 licences and NHS email accounts**

8. [PCA\(O\)2024\(04\)](#) provided an update on the provision of NHS email accounts to community optometrists and community optometry practices.
9. Further to that PCA, as of 19 December 2024, according to the National Primary Care Clinician Database system used by Health Boards the number of community optometrists and community optometry practices without an NHS email account has reduced significantly to 131 and 36 respectively.
10. Health Boards are asked to continue to help drive down this number by using the National Primary Care Clinician Database (NPCCD) system to:
  - identify community optometrists and community optometry practices without an NHS email account for whom they are the Host Health Board; and
  - contact those individuals and practices, with information on how to apply for an NHS email account.
11. Community optometrists and community optometry practices who are contacted by Health Boards in relation to this exercise are asked to respond in a timeous manner to ensure that this process can be completed.
12. Community optometrists who do not currently have a Microsoft 365 licence and NHS email account, and who have not yet been contacted by their Host Health Board with respect to the provision of these, are asked to make contact with their Host Health Board (the Board in which they undertake the majority of their GOS activity) regarding this. The same ask applies with respect to community optometry practices which do not currently have a practice NHS email account. Contact details for Health Boards can be found on [eyes.nhs.scot](#).
13. All community optometrists are reminded that, in order to prevent the deactivation or deletion of an NHS email account, they must interact with their mailbox on a regular basis. An example of interaction would be the reading of an email or the acceptance of a diary appointment.
14. Accounts will be flagged as “inactive” once a period of 30 days has passed where there is no interaction. Inactive accounts will then be subject to the deactivation / deletion policy of the relevant Health Board.

### **Clarification on the backdating of CGS remuneration uplifts**

15. It has been noted that a minor error was made in paragraph 9b) of [PCA\(O\)2024\(05\)](#), which set out the arrangements for the payment of backdated CGS fees.

16. The paragraph in question should have stated:

*For a) CGS registrations confirmed, and b) CGS assessments undertaken on or after 1 April 2024, and paid in the April 2024 to **November** 2024 payment schedules inclusive – Payment of backdated fees will be made in the February 2025 paid March 2025 payment schedule, which will be paid to practices on 24 March 2025.*

17. NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) will therefore process backdated fees on this basis.

### **Publication of a list of active CGS practice locations**

18. A list of practices currently providing the CGS has been published on the [eyes.nhs.scot](https://eyes.nhs.scot) website.

19. This information has been published to provide community optometrists with an awareness of the locations from which this service is being provided. This may be helpful in instances where they require to contact a CGS practice in relation to a patient clinical query. It may also be helpful to staff within the Hospital Eye Service to support the process of identifying an eligible patient's closest CGS practice, which may be across a Health Board boundary.

20. Initially, this information is provided only for Health Boards where the service has been rolled out and patients are registered. This will be expanded throughout the remainder of 2024/25 and into 2025/26 as remaining Health Boards join the service. In due course this data will be made publicly available instead on the 'Opticians' area of the [NHS Inform website](#).

### **Enquiries**

21. Any queries regarding backdated payments for CGS claims should be emailed to NSS at: [nss.psdgospayteam@nhs.scot](mailto:nss.psdgospayteam@nhs.scot).

22. Any other queries about this Memorandum should be emailed to the Scottish Government at: [eyecare@gov.scot](mailto:eyecare@gov.scot).

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