

OFNC statement: resumption of General Ophthalmic Services in England

The OFNC has today had further discussions with NHS England on arrangements for when and how optical practices can provide more face-to-face eye care. Despite recent speculation, NHS England has confirmed that a date for full resumption of face-to-face GOS has not yet been agreed.

We hope and expect that a resumption date will be announced soon and that the instructions from NHS England will be to provide service 'from' rather than 'on' that date. This will allow practices to make the arrangements they need to ensure the safety of their patients and staff. It would now be prudent for all practices to review their own plans to resume GOS work once the date is known.

We are also discussing with NHS England the need for ongoing financial support for practices since the need for social distancing and infection control will reduce their capacity significantly below pre-Covid levels. NHSE understands that support arrangements will need to work for all practices, including those that are not in a position to reopen at short notice. It has confirmed that the current average GOS payments support will be in place until at least the end of June.

The OFNC is working hard with NHS England to develop a robust replacement system of support which is fair, works for all practices, and ensures that all primary eye care needs are met, without adding to existing pressures on GPs, ophthalmology departments and A&E.