



Association of British Dispensing Opticians
Association of Optometrists
British Medical Association
Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians

Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee

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OFNC UPDATE: COVID-19 FUNDING FOR OPTICAL PRACTICES IN ENGLAND

6 October 2020

We issued an [update](#) on COVID-19 payments for GOS providers in England on 4 September, confirming that average GOS support would remain in place until the end of August. Since then, we have continued to negotiate with NHS England on further support for domiciliary providers, and for those fixed practices in deprived areas which rely heavily on GOS income.

NHS England has repeatedly told us it expects to issue further guidance on this and other pandemic-related issues soon – and is aware that the ongoing delay in confirming these arrangements is adding to the difficulties the sector is experiencing.

We have argued to NHS England that in these circumstances, the only fair thing to do is to make further support payments to all GOS contractors for September, in the same way as for August. We understand that NHS England is actively considering this and will confirm the position on September support payments in its forthcoming guidance.

It has been reported this week that Primary Care Support England (PCSE) has told some contractors that on NHS England's instructions, no further support payments are to be processed this month. We raised this with NHS England this morning as a matter of urgency, and can confirm it does not mean that NHS England has decided to stop support payments. The ongoing delay in issuing updated NHS England guidance means that any payments relating to September may have to be made retrospectively, rather than as part of the normal round of payments made in October.

This further delay and confusion is adding to the significant challenges facing the sector as a result of COVID-19. We continue to press NHS England to confirm the position on future support as a top priority, and will provide more information as soon as we can.

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The Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee (OFNC) is the national negotiating body for eye care in England with the Westminster Parliament, the Department of Health and Social Care, and NHS England-NHS Improvement. It comprises the leaders of the UK representative bodies: ABDO, AOP, FODO and BMA (for OMPs) and works in partnerships with the College of Optometrists and the General Optical Council.