

## INFORMATION FOR OPTOMETRY CONTRACTORS IN THE SOUTH EAST

We have prepared the following information which we hope you will find useful.

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2. [Setting up an NHS.net Connect shared email account or Egress access](#)
3. [NHS Safeguarding Guide](#)
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### 1. How to Contact the South East Optometry Commissioning Hub Team

In the South East region, the primary optometry commissioning and GOS contracting functions are carried out by the South East Optometry Commissioning Hub Team. We are hosted by **Thames Valley ICB (formerly BOB and Frimley ICB)**, which is why our email addresses include the prefix '**frimley**'. We work equally on behalf of all four South East Integrated Care Boards (ICBs):

- Thames Valley
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight (HIOW)
- Kent and Medway
- Surrey and Sussex

If you are advised to contact your ICB – please use the following contact details:

For general queries please contact: [frimleyicb.southeastoptometry@nhs.net](mailto:frimleyicb.southeastoptometry@nhs.net)

### 2. Setting up an NHS.net Connect Shared Email Account or Egress Access

#### NHS.net Connect

GOS contractors with up to 10 practices can apply for NHS.net Connect account via the registration portal: [Optometry – NHSmail Support](#). You must complete the **Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT)**, an online self-assessment toolkit when requesting an account. The toolkit can be accessed [here](#)

If a contractor has a NHS.net Connect shared mailbox, they can request via the shared mailbox individual NHS.net Connect emails for their staff including locums by emailing

[helpdesk@nhs.net](mailto:helpdesk@nhs.net) with the user details, see below. The locum requests should be for the site they most work at:

1. Full name:
2. UK registered mobile number:
3. Alternate email address:
4. Access required: User access/Owner access to the shared mailbox
5. <https://support.nhs.net/knowledge-base/opening-shared-mailboxes/>

The requested email will be added to the shared mailbox and the individual will receive their login details. They are not required to complete the DSPT.

- If you encounter issues with the NHS.net Connect registration, contact the NHS.net Connect team at [helpdesk@nhs.net](mailto:helpdesk@nhs.net).
- Shared mailbox guidance: <https://support.nhs.net/knowledge-base/opening-shared-mailboxes/>

## NHS Egress

GOS contractors with more than 10 practices (including franchisees and joint ventures), may need an NHS Egress account. The NHS Egress platform allows opticians to send secure emails for referrals and patient data using their own email address, similar to NHS.net Connect emails. To request an Egress invitation email, each user should complete the online form and expect to receive an invitation within a week.

- **Request form:** [Optometry - NHS Egress Account](#).
- **Explanation of Egress accounts:** <https://support.egress.com/s/>

## 3. NHS Safeguarding Guide

Up to date legislation and guidance relating to safeguarding can be accessed via the NHS Safeguarding Guide online. The guide provides information on how to report a safeguarding concern and has a directory of safeguarding contacts for every local authority. Further information can be found [here](#)

## 4. Reporting Temporary Suspensions of Service

Where a practice must temporarily close, the practice must notify the South East Optometry Commissioning Hub Team by emailing: [frimleyicb.southeastoptometry@nhs.net](mailto:frimleyicb.southeastoptometry@nhs.net)

## 5. NHS Primary Care Support England (PCSE)

It is a contractual requirement that all GOS claims are submitted electronically via your practice management system or [PCSE Online](#). The [Services | PCSE](#) website has useful information to help with GOS matters including payments, stationary, domiciliary services and patient registrations:

- [Ophthalmic Payments | PCSE](#)

- [Ophthalmic Enquiry Form](#)
- [Help | PCSE](#)

For urgent stationary order queries, email [PCSE.enquiries@nhs.net](mailto:PCSE.enquiries@nhs.net) with 'Urgent supplies query' in the subject line or via the 'Submit an Urgent Order' link on the portal. Non-urgent orders are delivered within 10 working days.

## 6. NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA)

The NHS BSA provide ophthalmic services on behalf of NHS England and the [Provider Assurance Ophthalmic | NHSBSA](#) has useful information regarding the work they carry out:

- Annual General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) complaints
- GOS 4 pre-authorisation
- GOS contract management
- Post-payment verification (PPV)

## 7. Annual Returns

It is a contractual requirement to comply with these returns. The Optometry Commissioning Hub team will send out reminders when these returns haven't been completed. The annual returns you need to make are:

<b>Annual complaints</b>	GOS contractors are required to prepare an annual report for complaints. This request will be sent to you from the NHS Business Services Authority Team.	<b>May - June</b>
<b>Data Security and Protection (DSP) toolkit</b>	General Ophthalmic Service (GOS) contractors are required to complete the online self-assessment toolkit. The toolkit can be accessed <a href="#">here</a>	<b>June</b>

## 8. Quality in Optometry (QiO)

Quality in Optometry (QiO) is a free clinical governance toolkit that helps optometric practices maintain high clinical standards. The [GOS Contracts checklist](#) ensures practices comply with their GOS contract. For more details, visit: [Quality in Optometry - Welcome](#).

- Contractors must complete and submit their GOS report every three years.
- Include an action plan to address any non-compliant issues.
- Practices flagged as outliers as well as a randomly selection may undergo a compliance visit.

For the NHS regional team you must select 'South East'

## 9. Complaints and Incidents

Patients or their representative can choose to complain either to the SES service provider **OR** the commissioner (the ICB). A complaint cannot be considered by both. If a complainant completes the local resolution process with the contractor, they cannot then ask the ICB to investigate the same complaint. If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the final response, they can escalate the matter directly to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

If your SES service is contacted by the ICB regarding a complaint, you must respond within the requested timeframe to ensure compliance with the 2009 Regulations.

### Thames Valley ICB

For Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire (West)

- Email: [bobicb.palscomplaints@nhs.net](mailto:bobicb.palscomplaints@nhs.net)
- POST: Thames Valley ICB, First Floor, Unipart House, Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2PG

For Bracknell Forest, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Slough

- **Phone:** 0300 561 0250
- **Email:** [scwcsu.palscomplaints@nhs.net](mailto:scwcsu.palscomplaints@nhs.net)
- **Post:** Patient Advice and Complaints Team (PACT)  
Ground Floor, Mallard Court  
Express Park  
Bristol Road  
Bridgwater  
TA6 4RN

### NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB

- Phone: 0300 561 2561 (answerphone facility available)
- Email: [hiowicb-hsi.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:hiowicb-hsi.patientexperience@nhs.net)
- Post: Patient Experience and Complaints Team, Omega House, 112 Southampton Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 5PB

### NHS Kent & Medway ICB

- Phone: 01634 335095 Option 7
- Email: [kmicb.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:kmicb.patientexperience@nhs.net)
- Post: Patient Experience and Complaints Team, 2nd Floor, Gail House, Lower Stone Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6NB

### NHS Surrey & Sussex ICB

For Surrey

- Phone: 0300 561 2500
- SMS text: 07917 087 560
- Email: [syheartlandsicb.complaints@nhs.net](mailto:syheartlandsicb.complaints@nhs.net)
- Post: Complaints Team, NHS Surrey and Sussex ICB, Block C, 1st Floor, Dukes Court, Woking, Surrey. GU21 5BH

For Sussex

- Phone: 0300 140 9854 (excluding weekends and bank holidays)
- Email: [sxicb.complaints@nhs.net](mailto:sxicb.complaints@nhs.net)

- Post: Patient Experience and Complaints Team, NHS Surrey and Sussex ICB, Sackville House, Brooks Close, Lewes BN7 2FZ

## 10. Translation and Interpretation (T&I) Services

All Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) oversee translation and interpretation (T&I) services to ensure patients can access primary care services. If you need T&I services, please email [frimleyicb.southeastoptometry@nhs.net](mailto:frimleyicb.southeastoptometry@nhs.net) for the necessary information.

## 11. Quarterly PPV Exercise undertaken by NHS BSA for GOS payments

The NHS BSA undertakes Post Payment Verification (PPV) for GOS payments on behalf of the commissioners. Each quarter, a number of GOS Contractors are selected according to risk-based metrics. GOS submissions are checked against clinical evidence to ensure claims are appropriate.

Feedback is provided on claim accuracy, highlighting areas for improvement. Funds for inappropriate claims are recovered and underclaims are reimbursed.

Areas which often lead to reclaims include:

- Inappropriate early sight testing
- Inappropriate prescribing of low prescriptions or small changes to prescriptions
- Inappropriate prescribing of tints and prisms

To avoid such reclaims contractors and performers are reminded to ensure that their decisions are clinically based, and they comply with GOC Standards, particularly Standard 7.6 available here: [7. Conduct appropriate assessments, examinations, treatments and referrals](#)

Guidance on prescribing low prescriptions and small changes to prescriptions can be found from the College of Optometrists paras A340-A345, accessible here: [Prescribing spectacles - College of Optometrists](#)

Further information can be found in Making Accurate Claims: [FODO - The Association for Eye Care Providers | Members | Guidance and support | Optical Confederation | Making accurate claims](#)

Contractors are also reminded that the frequencies of sight tests that are listed in the Memorandum of Understanding are NOT recommended frequencies, as the memorandum itself makes clear in paragraph 2.1 *'the intervals given... are not to be taken as automatically applying to all patients in a category'*