



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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**Secretary:** Tony Stafford

### UPDATE – IMPACT OF CURRENT LOCKDOWN ON PRACTICES IN ENGLAND

#### 5 February 2021

We reported in our statement of 8 January that the OFNC was in urgent discussions with NHS England about potential additional support for optical practices affected by the new restrictions. We have proposed potential models for this to NHS England and discussions are ongoing.

This week NHS England were able to share with us the GOS claims data for January 2021, which are a combination of real-time eGOS claims and paper claims. Taken together they suggest slightly lower overall GOS activity in January 2021 than in January 2020. Although this is a broad-brush picture based on aggregate data, we accept that the trend over the 10 months since the pandemic hit does not provide a strong case for generalised COVID-19 support across all GOS contractors at this point.

However, many practices have contacted OFNC member bodies calling for help as they are suffering a sharp downturn in demand for face-to-face care. This is because of the current restrictions, the Government's strong 'stay at home' messaging and the prospect of vaccination encouraging people to postpone care. Some are reporting activity at 50% or less of the usual level for January.

We are therefore urging NHS England as a matter of urgency to put in place some targeted, short-term financial support for practices experiencing a significant downturn in face-to-face activity and struggling to remain operational. We will provide a further update as soon as we can.

In the meantime we are pleased that the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out for patient-facing staff in optical practices and domiciliary providers is making good progress. Any GOS contractor experiencing difficulty in arranging vaccinations for their staff should contact their Local Optical Committee for assistance in the first instance.