**General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) contract application pilot**

**Initial briefing - August 2019**

**Background**

This briefing note is to advise that a GOS contract application pilot, administered by NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) on behalf of NHS England & NHS Improvement, will be taking place in the London region.

To deliver ophthalmic services on behalf of the NHS, it is necessary to apply for a General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) contract. In order to introduce a standardised and consistent approach, NHSBSA has been asked by NHS England & NHS Improvement to run a pilot for managing all processes relating to GOS contract applications. This will also include all voluntary contract terminations.

It is anticipated that the pilot will start in mid-September and it will last three months. The aim of the pilot is to identify the best way to administer contract applications and voluntary terminations. The pilot will be evaluated no earlier than three months from the start date to identify the best way to progress with a national rollout. The pilot will begin on Monday 16 September 2019.

**What will the new process look like?**

Applications

The new process will be based on those outlined in the [NHS England Eye Health Policy Book](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/policy-book-for-eye-health/). The pilot will cover the whole London region and all applications for GOS contracts after this date should follow this process:

1. The applicant should go to the [NHSBSA website](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/what-we-do/ophthalmic-provider-assurance) and download the relevant GOS contract application form:
   * If you are an individual or partnership applying for a GOS contract to deliver mandatory services, please download and Annex 5.1 and Annex 5.3
   * If you are an individual or partnership applying for a GOS contract to deliver additional services, please download Annex 5.2. and Annex 5.3
   * If you are a body corporate applying for a GOS contract to deliver mandatory services, please download Annex 5.4 and Annex 5.6
   * If you are a body corporate applying for a GOS contract to deliver additional services selection download Annex 5.5 and Annex 5.6
   * If you are looking to become a dispensing optician only, please download the dispensing only practice form.

For guidance around what information is needed to complete an application form, please see the [contract administration section on the NHSBSA website](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/what-we-do/ophthalmic-provider-assurance).

1. You should complete the application form and send it to [nhsbsa.pao-contractadmin@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsa.pao-contractadmin@nhs.net). The application will be acknowledged by an automatically generated message, stating that NHSBSA will respond to the query within 5 working days.
2. If there are any issues with the application, the applicant will be contacted directly by NHSBSA to resolve. Any issues with the application form may delay the processing of the application.

Please note, under certain circumstances it may be necessary for applicants to provide NHSBSA with evidence of an up to date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. NHSBSA will inform applicants when this is the case and provide information about applying for a DBS check. Guidance will also be available via the NHSBSA website.

1. Once the application form has been processed, NHSBSA will contact the applicant to arrange a site visit on a mutually convenient date and time. For mandatory service applications, the site visit will be held at the applicant’s practice, and for additional services, it will take place at a mutually agreed location where NHSBSA/NHS England & NHS Improvement will assess the equipment used. Guidance around suitable locations will be available from the NHSBSA website. If the applicant is applying for mandatory and additional contracts, the site visit for both can take place at the applicant’s premises. NHSBSA will provide applicants with guidance prior to the visit regarding how to prepare for a site visit and the evaluation criteria.
2. Following the site visit, NHSBSA will engage with NHS England & NHS Improvement and share relevant information to allow NHS England & NHS Improvement to determine if the application should be approved or rejected. Following direction by NHS England & NHS Improvement, NHSBSA will then notify the applicant of the outcome.
3. NHSBSA will liaise with NHS England & NHS Improvement and Primary Care Support England (PCSE) to coordinate setting the applicant up as a GOS contractor. Detailed guidance around what information is required from the applicant will be specified to the contractor.

The pilot will go live on Monday 16 September 2019. All new GOS contract applications for the London region will need to be submitted in this way from the start of the pilot.

Voluntary Terminations

Under the terms of the Eye Health Policy Book, contractors can voluntarily terminate their contracts. Contracts can be terminated three months after the date on which notice was served or at a mutually agreed date.

If you are a contractor in the London region and you wish to terminate your contract after 16 September 2019, please go to the [contract administration section on the NHSBSA website](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/what-we-do/ophthalmic-provider-assurance) and download the voluntary termination form. Complete the form and return it to [nhsbsa.pao-contractadmin@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsa.pao-contractadmin@nhs.net) guidance will be available from the NHSBSA website.

Please note; if you are an existing GOS contractor and you wish to terminate your contract because you are transferring your contract to another contractor, you will need to complete a Voluntary Termination form and return it to [nhsbsa.pao-contractadmin@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsa.pao-contractadmin@nhs.net).

**Further queries**

If you have any queries, please contact NHSBSA at

[nhsbsa.pao-contractadmin@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsa.pao-contractadmin@nhs.net) or call 0300 330 9403.