

Patient exemption checking

Communications toolkit for
ophthalmic teams in England

Contents

Summary	3
Key messages	4
Short copy (114 words)	5
Long copy (372 words)	6
Suggested social media content	8
Social media images	9
Contact	10

Summary

From 1 September 2021, the temporary signature suspension is being lifted. This means that any time a patient makes a declaration that they are entitled to free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic services they must complete and sign a GOS declaration form before any treatment begins and to produce evidence.

More information and full guidance is available on the ***NHSBSA website***.

Key messages

- From 1 September 2021, any time a patient makes a declaration that they are entitled to free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic services, the ophthalmic team must ask them to complete and sign a GOS declaration form before any treatment begins and to provide evidence.
- **Visit our website** for information and guidance on patient exemptions.

Short copy (114 words)

From 1 September 2021, any time a patient makes a declaration that they are entitled to free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic services, the ophthalmic team must ask them to complete and sign a GOS declaration form and to produce evidence.

The NHSBSA has produced fresh guidance to help primary care contractors understand their legislative requirements, follow the correct procedure, and provide support to patients.

Not all benefits entitle people to help with health costs. Patients can find out if they're entitled to free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic services and help with other NHS costs using the **online eligibility checker**.

Full guidance and information for ophthalmic teams is available on the **NHSBSA website**.

Long copy (372 words)

From 1 September 2021, any time a patient makes a declaration that they are entitled to free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic services, the ophthalmic team must ask them to complete and sign a GOS declaration form and to produce evidence.

In response to the pandemic, and to help limit the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care approved a temporary measure in England to suspend the need for patients to sign for free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic services. The suspension was initially for a period of five months and was later extended to 31 August 2021.

The aim of the suspension was to protect primary care staff and patients, avoid cross-contamination and help minimise the handling of paperwork when collecting medicines or receiving dental and eye care.

The temporary signature suspension has now been lifted.

This means that, from 1 September 2021, any time a patient attends an ophthalmic practice for an NHS-funded sight tests, glasses or contact lenses, the ophthalmic team must:

- ask them to complete and sign a GOS declaration form before any treatment begins
- ask them to complete the patient's details and patient's declaration section of the form, if the patient is entitled to free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic services
- ask to see evidence of their eligibility
- note on the patient record system if they show evidence of a valid exemption, along with the expiry date of the evidence, if applicable

- complete and sign the GOS 3 declaration where entitled. A second signature on the reverse of the GOS 3 must be obtained at the time of collection.

To coincide with the move, the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) has produced fresh guidance to help primary care contractors understand their legislative requirements, follow the correct procedure, and provide support to patients.

The rules around entitlement to free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic treatment can be confusing. It's important to remember that not all benefits entitle people to help with their health costs.

Full guidance and information for ophthalmic team members is available on the ***NHSBSA website***.

For information about help with health costs, visit: ***www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-help-health-costs***

Information for patients about exemptions and the online eligibility checker can be found here: ***www.nhs.uk/CheckBeforeYouTick***

Suggested social media content

Suggested posts for communicating with ophthalmic teams:

- # Any time a patient makes a declaration that they are entitled to free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic services, the ophthalmic team must ask them to complete and sign a GOS declaration form and to produce evidence.
Visit: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ophthalmic-exemptions
- ♥ Is your patient exempt from paying for NHS ophthalmic services? The NHSBSA has produced guidance to help your ophthalmic teams understand their legislative requirements, follow the correct procedure, and provide support to patients.
Visit: www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ophthalmic-exemptions

Suggested posts for patient facing channels:

- # Not all benefits entitle people to free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic services. Find out if you're entitled using the online eligibility checker:
www.nhs.uk/CheckBeforeYouTick
#CheckBeforeYouTick
- ♥ Are you entitled to free NHS ophthalmic services? Use the online eligibility checker to find out what you're entitled to. Learn more: www.nhs.uk/CheckBeforeYouTick
#CheckBeforeYouTick

Social media images



Not all benefits entitle people to free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic services.

Exemptions guidance for ophthalmic teams:
www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ophthalmic-exemptions

NHS
Business Services Authority

Download



Not all benefits entitle people to free or reduced cost NHS ophthalmic services.

Check what help you could get to pay for NHS costs

Find out if you're entitled using the online eligibility checker:
www.nhs.uk/CheckBeforeYouTick

NHS
Business Services Authority

Download



Is your patient exempt from paying for NHS ophthalmic services?

Exemptions guidance for ophthalmic teams:
www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ophthalmic-exemptions

NHS
Business Services Authority

Download

Contact

If you have any questions, comments or you receive any media enquiries, please contact the NHSBSA communications team:

 ***nhsbsa.communicationsteam@nhs.net***