



10 March 2022

To: all optometrists, dispensing opticians and optical businesses

Dear colleague,

Re: COVID-19 vaccination

We want to thank you for the huge efforts you have made to provide the best patient care possible during the pandemic.

We know that most of you are already vaccinated against COVID-19 and that, by being vaccinated, you are helping to protect yourself, your colleagues and patients, especially those most at risk of COVID-19.

We are writing to highlight the importance of vaccination against transmissible diseases and the personal and professional responsibilities that healthcare professionals have under the General Optical Council's Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticiansⁱ and Standards for Optical Businessesⁱⁱ.

Vaccination is considered to be among the safest, most effective and evidence-based approaches to help protect people from infectious diseasesⁱⁱⁱ. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has authorised the use of COVID-19 vaccines in the UK following a rigorous review of their safety, quality and efficacy^{iv}. The evidence from clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccines approved for UK use shows these to be safe and effective, and over ten billion doses have been given worldwide, providing a very high degree of protection from serious illness, hospitalisation and death.

The strong recommendation therefore from the regulatory, government and professional representative bodies is that colleagues in patient-facing roles should be vaccinated in line with each nation's public health advice. We encourage employers to support this by sharing the benefits of being vaccinated with their staff^v. We advise that where a healthcare professional is not fully vaccinated because of a medical exemption or other reason, they must ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to mitigate the risk of coronavirus transmission to patients and colleagues by conducting risk assessments and following rigorous infection prevention and control measures, including not attending work when unwell, self-testing and taking precautions when caring for those who may be more vulnerable due to age or clinical risk factors.

If you are in a patient-facing role and are still unsure about whether to have the primary vaccine course and/or booster, please speak to your employer, professional body or GP, or access public health advice online. A range of videos and materials have been produced to help healthcare professionals and the public understand the benefits of vaccination for themselves and for their patients, which are available on the websites of The College of Optometrists^{vi} and the Association of British Dispensing Opticians^{vii}. For further information about how to get your vaccine in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland please go online^{viii ix x xi}.

We want to thank you for your continuing work to create a safe environment for our patients in the eye care sector.

Please do not hesitate to contact any of us for more information, or to discuss any concerns you have and we will do our best to help address these.

Kind regards,



Leonie Milliner

Chief Executive
and Registrar
General Optical
Council (GOC)



**Sir Anthony
Garrett**

General Secretary
Association of
British Dispensing
Opticians (ABDO)



Simon Rodwell

Secretary General
The Association of
Contact Lens
Manufacturers Ltd
(ACLM)



**Dr Christian
French**

Chairman
The Association
for Independent
Optometrists
and Dispensing
Opticians (AIO)



Adam Sampson

Chief Executive
Officer
Association of
Optometrists
(AOP)



Neil Retallic

President
British Contact
Lens Association
(BCLA)



Colin Davidson

President
The College of
Optometrists



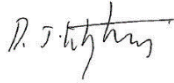
Harjit Sandhu

Managing Director
FODO, The
Association for
Eye Care
Providers



Raymond Curran

Head of
Ophthalmic
Services
Health & Social
Care Board,
Northern Ireland



**Richard
Whittington**

Chief Executive
Local Optical
Committee
Support Unit
(LOCSU)

W Stockdale


**William
Stockdale**

Chair
Optometry
Northern Ireland
(ONI)



Sali Davis

Chief Executive
Optometry
Wales/Cymru



David Quigley

Chair
Optometry
Scotland



David O'Sullivan

Chief Optometric
Adviser / Prif
Optometrig
Ymgynghorol
Welsh
Government /
Llywodraeth
Cymru

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- i <https://optical.org/en/standards-and-guidance/standards-of-practice-for-optometrists-and-dispensing-opticians/>
- ii <https://optical.org/en/standards-and-guidance/standards-for-optical-businesses/>
- iii <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book#the-green-book>
- iv <https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/datasummary>
- v <https://www.acas.org.uk/working-safely-coronavirus/getting-the-coronavirus-vaccine-for-work/supporting-staff-to-get-vaccinated>
- vi <https://www.college-optometrists.org/news/2021/december/supporting-optometrists-in-their-vaccine-decisions>
- vii <https://www.abdo.org.uk/coronavirus/>
- viii England: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>
- ix Northern Ireland: <https://covid-19.hscni.net/get-vaccinated/>
- x Scotland: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine>
- xi Wales: <https://gov.wales/get-your-covid-19-vaccination>