



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 Opticians<sup>i</sup> and Standards for Optical Businesses<sup>ii</sup>.

Vaccination is considered to be among the safest, most effective and evidence-based approaches to help protect people from infectious diseases<sup>iii</sup>. 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<sup>iv</sup>. 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<sup>v</sup>. 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<sup>vi</sup> and the Association of British Dispensing Opticians<sup>vii</sup>. For further information about how to get your vaccine in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland please go online<sup>viii ix x xi</sup>.

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  
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**Dr Christian  
French**

Chairman  
The Association  
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**Adam Sampson**

Chief Executive  
Officer  
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(AOP)



**Neil Retallic**

President  
British Contact  
Lens Association  
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**Colin Davidson**

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The College of  
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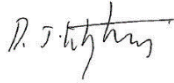
**Harjit Sandhu**

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**David O'Sullivan**

Chief Optometric  
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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>