LOC SUPPORT UNIT
SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY EYE CARE DEVELOPMENT

LOC HOT BRIEF
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LOCs are asked to circulate this Hot Brief to all contractors and performers in their area as soon as possible.

Guidance on Overseas Visitor Charging Regulations and Eye Care Services

Following amendments to the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015 there has been some confusion as to whether or not overseas visitors are entitled to NHS funded eye care services.

The purpose of this guidance is to clarify that:

- **Overseas visitors should not be charged for GOS services**
- There is no nationality or residency requirement for someone to be eligible for GOS

Background

The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015 were amended in 2017 to extend charging for overseas visitors. Since 23 October 2017 any organisation providing NHS funded services is required to make and recover charges to overseas visitors for services they have received unless they are primary care services (as set out in the NHS Act 2006) or an exemption applies.

On 1 August 2018, NHS England issued a suite of updated guidance to NHS providers about how to implement these charges.

NHS funded eye care services

GOS services are primary care services and therefore do not fall within the scope of the charging regulations.

In addition, the eligibility criteria for NHS sight testing service, set out in the Primary Ophthalmic Services Regulations 2008, include no nationality or residence requirements. Therefore, if someone asks for an NHS funded sight test and they meet any of the criteria (e.g. they are under 16 years of age), then they are eligible for NHS funded GOS services regardless of their nationality.

As always, you can only provide MECS to people who are registered with a GP in the relevant CCG area. If a patient who is eligible for MECs via GP registration is an overseas visitor, you should not charge them.

The published statement can be found on the Optical Confederation website.

For further advice contact your representative body:

ABDO dmcgill@abdolondon.org.uk
AOP regulation@aop.org.uk
FODO optics@fodo.com
LOCSU richardknight@locsu.co.uk

Any LOC requiring advice / support on any aspect of their work should contact LOCSU on 020 7549 2051 or email info@locsu.co.uk

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