

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) for members of the public

1. Can I still visit my optician?

Yes. Opticians remain open for all care. Essential, urgent or emergency care will be prioritised, and some services may be delivered remotely based on risk of transmission of COVID-19 and risk to the patient. If in any doubt about whether you qualify for the above, please telephone your local optician for advice before attending the practice.

[The College of Optometrists' website](#) 'Look after your eyes' has a frequently asked questions section for patients related to COVID-19 where you can find further information.

2. Can I still buy spectacles and contact lenses from my optician?

If you need new spectacles or contact lenses, you should contact your opticians for advice. They may need to carry out an appointment in person or remotely e.g. over the telephone or video-conference. The decision of this will be based on risk of transmission of COVID-19 and risk to the patient. We have made amendments to guidance for our registrants to more easily supply spectacles and contact lenses without the need for face to face visits.

3. What should I do if I can't get hold of my optician?

Most opticians are open for business. It is advisable to telephone the practice in advance rather than expecting a walk-in service as new measures have been put into place to mitigate the risk of COVID-19.

If you are unable to contact your usual opticians, we recommend that you use the [NHS service search](#).

4. Can I buy contact lenses online?

In the UK it is only possible to buy contact lenses online if you have been fitted for contact lenses previously and have a contact lens specification providing details of the contact lenses you require.

GOC registrants are required to meet the high standards that we establish in order to protect the public. You can check whether a supplier is registered with us on our [website](#).

5. How are hearings being conducted during the COVID-19 emergency?

Physical hearings will no longer take place at the GOC office. Wherever possible, we will hold remote virtual hearings via teleconference or video-link, or on the papers. We have released a [statement on hearings](#) which provides further information.

6. Will you continue to quality assure educational institutions during the COVID-19 emergency?

During this emergency our approach to quality assurance will be flexible and pragmatic. We will likely postpone some of our quality assurance activity where it is appropriate to do so, and carry out some activity remotely rather than attending the institution in person. We will prioritise engagement and quality assurance activity for programmes with provisional approval, particularly those due to receive their first intake of students in September 2020 whose preparation plans are likely to be significantly disrupted, and those providers who are due a quality assurance visit between now until December 2020. Further information can be found in our [statement on education quality assurance activity](#).

7. How can I contact the GOC during the COVID-19 emergency?

Where possible, please send your enquiries by email. For a full list of email addresses within the organisation visit our [Contact Us](#) page.

We have limited provision for receiving postal deliveries, so please allow two weeks for us to respond to anything sent to us by post.

If you have not been able to find what you need on our website or in these FAQs, you can call us on 020 7580 3898.

Please note we will respond to messages 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.