Guide to Information provided by NHS optical contractors under the model publication scheme

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 all public authorities are required to have and operate a publication scheme approved by the Information Commissioner. Those providing general ophthalmic services under contract to the NHS in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are public authorities in respect of information relating to those services.

It is the intention of the Information Commissioner that all public authorities should adopt and operate the one model scheme that has been approved. This is a very general scheme based on the principal that all public authorities need to recognize the public interest in the transparency of the services provided for and paid for by the general public. It is a commitment to make information easily available to the public.

Note: The scheme is only for information held as a public authority and does not include any information that is held for other purposes or would be exempt from release.

The scheme requires three documents to be considered:

- the model scheme itself;
- our guidance on adopting and operating the scheme; and,
- a guide provided by the public authority indicating what information will be provided, how it will be provided and whether any charge will be made for its provision.

To assist optical contractors we have produced the outline of a guide for their use. They should consider expanding elements of it to provide greater explanation and additional information where this can be done. For example, if there are specific plans for the provision of NHS services, these could be detailed. It is not necessary to submit the guide completed by the firm or practice for approval.

We recognize that it is unlikely that optical contractors are going to have registers available for public inspection and while this remains the case “None Held” can be entered in this section. Under policies and procedures we have listed the policies we would expect optometrists to have. Again if this is not the case, “Not held” can entered in the relevant part. Any additional policies should also be listed.

Fees should be requested only where this is done in accordance with our guidance.

Information available from [*Insert name of person or firm providing NHS optical services*] under the Freedom of Information Act model publication scheme

Information covered by this scheme is only about the general ophthalmic services we provide under contract to the National Health Service

Information to be published	**How the information can be obtained** (e.g. hard copy, website)	**Cost**
Class1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts) This will be current information only		
Company or practice background		
Contact details for the practice (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))		
Details of those providing NHS funded services in the practice		
Opening hours		
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit) Current and previous financial year as a minimum Information in this class will be published only where it does not and is not likely to adversely affect the commercial position of the firm or practice.		

Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews) Current and previous year as a minimum		
Plans for the development and provision of NHS services		
Audit of NHS income (outline only)		
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions) Current and previous year as a minimum		
Records of decisions made in the practice/firm affecting the provision of NHS services		
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities) Current information only (delete any policies not actually held)		
Equality and diversity policy		
Health and safety policy		
Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)		
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)		
Data protection policies		
Policies and procedures for handling requests for information		

Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only		
Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)		
Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses) Current information only		
The services provided under contract to the NHS		
Charges for treatment		
Information leaflets		