

ADVICE NOTICE

2nd July 2009



Association of British
Dispensing Opticians



National Patient Safety Agency

Safer Practice Notice

Ref: NPSA/2009/SPN 002

This NPSA notice states that, from 18th September 2009, all Primary and Secondary providers should use the patient's NHS number. NPSA advice is applicable in England and Wales.

This is medically driven and primarily for General Practice and the secondary sector. It cannot and does not apply to community optometric practices.

Our advice

If your patient has their NHS number, or you have it already, please use that on the GOS form. However, most of your patients will not know their NHS number and you should not insist on them producing it.

The NPSA notice explains that this change is linked to the NHS National IT Programme and says that "...using the NHS Number will allow authorised NHS staff to access a patient's records through the NHS Care Records Service...". Optometry and optics is not included in the National IT programme, and the Connecting for Health guidance document on NHS numbers is clearly medically and secondary care focussed.

Some PCTs have written to contractors alerting them to the requirements of this Notice. **You should reply to PCTs that this does not apply to you.** If they query this, refer them either to Connecting for Health or to the NPSA for advice.

If the PCT, payments Agency, or the Optometric Adviser tries to insist on the use of NHS numbers, please seek advice immediately from your respective representative body and contact your LOC.

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