

## **OPTICIANS PROFILES AND FEEDBACK ON NHS CHOICES**

Target audience: Opticians and PCTs

The purpose of this briefing is to explain how providers can edit their own NHS Choices profiles, how patient feedback on the site will operate and how providers can respond to those comments on the website.

### **INTRODUCTION**

NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) is the primary public facing website of the NHS and regularly receives over 8 million visits a month. It launched in June 2007 to provide a comprehensive and trusted source of reliable health information to help people make the most of their health and get the best out of the healthcare system.

Its pages include directories of local health services, information on a wide range of conditions and treatments and accessible public health information. The site also shows comparative data about healthcare providers, to help people make informed choices about their healthcare. This includes feedback on services.

Since its launch, patients have been able to post online feedback about their hospital experience. This extended to GP practices in October 2009 and dentists at the end of 2010. The site currently has more than 55,000 comments online.

It is part of the Government's agenda to give people more information, control and greater choice about their care. One of the guiding principles of NHS Choices is that a modern, taxpayer-funded NHS should provide the public with the best possible information on NHS services and the opportunity to comment publicly on the NHS services they receive.

Every month, thousands of visitors search for opticians services on NHS Choices, including opening hours, contact details and services. It is the intention that from mid-September, visitors to the site will also be able to leave feedback on their experience of the provider's services, primarily NHS.

We are looking to providers and PCTs to play an essential role in ensuring that local information on services is accessible and accurate by editing their profiles and managing patient feedback.

**THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES ARE SEPARATE FROM THE INITIAL SIGN-UP PROCESS IN SEPTEMBER 2011, WHICH REQUESTED YOU TO CONTACT YOUR OPTICAL LEAD FOR PROFILES DELEGATION.**

### **MANAGING YOUR PROFILE ON NHS CHOICES**

Every opticians delivering NHS care in England has a profile presence (free mini-website) on nhs.uk. This mini website is accessible to millions of visitors every month. Patients go online and access information on opening hours, staff qualifications and services, among other areas.

The current information on these profiles has been provided by the PCT or through information services within the NHS. However, opticians are clearly best placed to control their profile and maintain their own information, ensuring the information relating to their practice is up-to-date.

Described below are the practical steps to start editing your profile, however, we recommend you navigate around the sections to explore the different opportunities the site offers you.

Obtaining your log on details:

The passwords for editing your profile and responding to feedback are separate. Feedback will be addressed later in this document.

Your PCT's web editor will already be set up as an administrator of your profile. If you have not taken advantage of the initial centralised sign-up process in August, you can obtain editing rights for your own profile by contacting your PCT web editor as soon as possible and they will be able to assign you permissions. You can obtain your PCT web editor's name by contacting the PCT or emailing [thechoicesteam@nhschoices.nhs.uk](mailto:thechoicesteam@nhschoices.nhs.uk).

Then:

- You will receive an email from NHS Choices explaining that your web editor has assigned you editing rights, containing your log in details and a link to get you started.
- Once you have your login details, you can navigate to any page on NHS Choices (it does not have to be your own profile pages), find the 'log in' link at the top right hand corner of the page and enter your details.
- Upon successful log in you will be presented with an administrative screen listing the NHS Choices opticians' profile(s) for which you have editing rights. Clicking on the name of the profile(s) will take you

directly to their pages, ready for editing. **YOU CANNOT EDIT OTHER PROVIDERS PROFILES.**

- If NHS Choices needs to communicate with you about the editing system, this administrative area is also the area you will see alerts and messages.

Updating information:

- The editing mechanism adopts a 'what you see is what you get' (WYSIWYG) style of editing. This is in order to make it as user friendly and quick to use as possible. Your profile comprises of a variety of pages of information, organised in modules. Where you are able to edit a module, it will have a clearly marked edit button for you to click.
- Upon clicking the edit button, the fields within the module will become editable. Upon making changes, just select Save and your changes will be committed, or Cancel if you no longer wish to proceed.
- In the event that you have saved your changes and are unhappy with your edit, the editing system will offer an undo function for your most recent change.
- Some modules are not editable, such as centrally managed NHS Choices data, or the data may be editable on a different page instead. These modules will be marked with a button marked 'This cannot be edited'. NHS contracted services are posted and edited by the commissioner but providers can edit the dedicated section to highlight key aspects of their care.
- Clicking on this button, displays text explaining whether the module is centrally managed or if the information can be edited, but in another area of the site (such as reusable contact information).
- You will be able to see any changes you make immediately so can judge how your pages look with certain information populated.

## **OPTICIANS' FEEDBACK ON NHS CHOICES**

Patients are already able to leave feedback about their GP practices, dentists and their hospital experience. We now intend to roll this out to opticians too.

Patients will be able to leave feedback on their experiences on the level of service provided by opticians on NHS Choices, the main focus of which will be NHS services. The comments can be viewed by members of the public visiting your profile.

Opticians' patients that want to leave a comment will firstly locate the relevant provider on NHS Choices and click on '*Add your comments*' under the *Performance and Feedback* section. Patients will be asked to state whether, based on their overall experience, they would recommend the provider to a friend. They will then be asked to evaluate the provider by typing in a free-text comments box. No comments will be posted until they have been individually moderated.

Patient comments will appear on the provider's profile page under the '*Patient feedback*' tab.

## **PROVIDERS' RIGHT OF REPLY**

Each provider will have the ability to reply to each comment and replies will appear directly beneath the original comment.

When a patient comment appears, an automatic e-mail alert will be sent to the opticians lead at the PCT. Opticians practices can request to have this alert sent directly to themselves by asking the lead to transfer 'comment administrator' responsibility to them. NHS Choices will strongly recommend that PCTs delegate response rights to the optician.

## **Responding to a comment**

TO RESPOND TO YOUR COMMENTS, YOU MUST CONTACT YOUR PCT OPTICIANS LEAD TO OBTAIN YOUR PASSWORD.

- When a comment is left on a provider profile, "comment administrators" will receive an email alert from NHS Choices. This email will be from the sender 'No Reply' and will have the title 'NHS Choices: content published'.
- The email will tell you that a comment has been left against the your profile and provide a link to that comment on NHS Choices. It will also provide a link to the system, called 'organisation response', where the provider can write a reply.
- You will need to login to the organisation response system using your email address and password. These details are the same as for your NHS Choices account (which will automatically be set-up) and will have been

provided to you by email when your comment administrator account was activated. You can change your password at [Changing your NHSC password](#)

- Once you are logged in to 'organisation response', you will see all of the comments that have been made about your provider. Each comment will have a link to 'Enter a response'.
- When clicked, a box will open up into which you can write your response. Responses can be a maximum of 2,000 characters.
- When you have finished writing your response, click the 'submit response' button.
- This response will then enter NHS Choices moderation system. Once it has passed moderation, it will be published beneath the original comment.

SOME HINTS AND TIPS TO REPLYING CAN BE FOUND AT THE BACK OF THIS BRIEFING DOCUMENT.

### **SAFEGUARDS**

A number of important safeguards will protect providers and members of staff from unwarranted threats to their reputation. These are as follows:

- All feedback will be pre-moderated by a dedicated team of external trained moderators. The moderation organisation also manage the feedback made on the NSPCC, Channel 4 and BBC websites. Comments that are racist, libellous, generally offensive or defamatory will not be allowed;
- Individual staff (either clinical or non-clinical) cannot be named and all gender references will be removed;
- Whilst anonymous comments are allowed, users have to provide a validated e-mail address before feedback can appear on the site so NHS Choices can contact the correspondent if necessary;
- An 'alert' button will enable providers to bring to NHS Choices' attention feedback they deem to be unsuitable or offensive. NHS Choices will then investigate these. If the moderation rules have been broken, the comment will be removed permanently. If not, it will re-appear;
- Users are prohibited from using NHS Choices to campaign or make politically motivated comments;
- Vexatious comments are not permissible;

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you require any further information about any aspect of patient feedback, please email [thechoicesteam@nhschoices.nhs.uk](mailto:thechoicesteam@nhschoices.nhs.uk) or visit <http://www.nhs.uk/opticians> to download an electronic copy of this briefing and view further information.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **Q. When will patient feedback start?**

A. The system will go live w/c 12<sup>th</sup> September 2011. However, we will not be promoting the feedback service until opticians have had an opportunity to obtain passwords and edited their profile. It is expected this will be in early October, but all PCTs and professional membership bodies will be notified in advance of a public launch.

### **Q. Why is NHS Choices doing this?**

A. In a modern, taxpayer-funded NHS it is right that people have the opportunity to leave feedback on the services they receive. Patient feedback is an important source of information which, in conjunction with other provider details on [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk), such as the available services and facilities, can help patients choose the right provider for them and their families. It is also an important source of information for providers to assess their current service and if necessary how and where to make changes.

### **Q. Won't it just serve people with a grievance or those who simply want to moan?**

A. The evidence from three years' worth of patient feedback on hospitals, GP practices and dental services suggests not. There are more than 55,000 patient comments on NHS Choices and the majority contain positive feedback. Around 60% of GP patients that express an opinion state that they would recommend their practice to a friend.

### **Q. You say that patients will not be able to name individual opticians and other staff, but what about single-handed providers?**

A. All comments are pre-moderated to ensure that nothing malicious, libellous or defamatory will appear on the site. Because all comments will be read and checked before they appear, we can ensure that unfair threats to an optician's reputation are avoided. Moderators will be made aware where a comment is about a small or single-handed opticians so they can take this into account.

### **Q. Much of the work of opticians, such as the sale of glasses, is private so surely is outside the scope of an NHS feedback system i.e. people should not be able to complain about prices of glasses at a practice.**

A. NHS Choices is about NHS services and where a comment is made that is unrelated to NHS services or the level of service an individual may receive then moderators can exclude the comment from being published.

**For further information:**

For all enquiries regarding NHS Choices profiles and patient feedback, please contact the NHS Choices helpdesk in the first instance or visit [www.nhs.uk/opticians](http://www.nhs.uk/opticians)

**HINTS AND TIPS ON REPLYING TO COMMENTS**

**Guidance for providers on responding to patient feedback**

1. Respond to all comments, good or bad, as it shows you listen.
2. Patient comments are an excellent opportunity to market the service you are providing.
3. Welcome all opinions and try not to be defensive or aggressive if they're negative.
4. Do not use the same stock response to each comment. If anything, this looks worse than not responding at all.
5. Treat anonymous comments with just as much seriousness as named ones. Just because someone has chosen to comment anonymously, it doesn't mean that the comment is malicious. For anonymous comments, a good approach is to suggest the user visits you to talk in person about the issues they've raised.
6. Providers can respond to most comments without breaching patient confidentiality. As a bare minimum, a provider can say that patient confidentiality prevents them going into detail but that the commenter is welcome to visit to discuss the issues personally.
7. Remember that statements made in patient feedback are opinions, not statements of fact. NHS Choices cannot check whether each opinion is factually correct, nor is it a legal requirement that comments be entirely factually correct in order to be published. Just because you disagree with the opinion or believe it is wrong, it does not mean it is defamatory for it to be published.
8. Say who has left the response. This adds a personal touch and increases the perception that the provider is an open, welcoming place.
9. Remember that your reply will be the final word. People giving feedback are not allowed to post further comments about the same experience or respond to your replies. If you see this, please 'report' the comment and we will remove it.
10. The commenter may have said nothing to the provider when they had their experience, yet still write a very negative comment. Just because you don't recognise the experience, it doesn't mean it didn't happen.

11. Patient feedback is completely separate from the official complaints process. If someone is following that process, they are still entitled to leave feedback.
12. Do not ask NHS Choices to tell you who wrote the comment. We can't. If we did, we would breach data protection laws.
13. Remember, your response will be seen by everyone who reads your provider's comments, not just the original commenter. Your reply is a good opportunity to market your organisation's approach to patient comments.