

## FAQs to assist you in completing the weekly Financial Support Scheme (FSS) monitoring survey

Q: In recording the total number of staff normally employed in my practice, do I need to include locums?

A: No, locums should not be considered as normal employees and should not be recorded for the purposes of FSS monitoring returns.

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Q: Do the staff recorded as 'present' need to be physically on the premises of the practice providing essential and urgent care?

A: Please interpret this as the **working status** of the staff on a daily basis i.e. working in practice or, working from a remote location dealing with work and essential and urgent eye care service provision with any requirement to attend the practice as necessary.

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Q: If I am the only optometrist working and undertaking all practice duties and support can I record myself as being the one person present for both categories of staff (Optometry + Support)

A: No, the number of staff recorded relates to the actual number of staff in each category. You should not indicate "1" for each staff category if you are the only person working in the practice.

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Q: I have lost/forgotten my PIN to allow entry of my weekly survey, what do I do?

A: Please contact [ophthalmic.services@hscni.net](mailto:ophthalmic.services@hscni.net) to request the PIN number.

Q: I am the Contractor and owner of a practice but in my business arrangements I am not technically an employee, do I record myself in the staff numbers?

A: In relation to your own business arrangements and your status as an employee or not, for the purposes of the Ophthalmic Contractor FSS monitoring, it is determined as those employed (working) in the practice, and who are involved in the provision of HSC funded ophthalmic services. HSCB are not in a position to comment on the specific relevance of specific business arrangements for other support schemes and you may wish to seek business or accountancy input should this situation apply to you.

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Q: What is included in essential **patient contact**?

A: '**Essential**' **patient contact** includes the following:

- Essential GOS Sight Tests (face to face)
- Essential dispensing and repairs/adjustments (done in practice)
- Essential dispensing and repairs (remotely actioned telephone/email and post/delivery)

'Essential' patient contact should only be recorded for those patients who are HSC eligible (i.e. not for private patients, or for contact lens orders etc....). Where a patient does not normally attend your practice, but you have repaired their spectacles on site and you do not know if they are HSC funded, please do record this as an essential patient contact (done in practice).

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Q: Do HSCB not already know my 'essential' care activity through the number of GOS claims I have submitted?

A: Yes, HSCB will have information on some of the 'essential' care you have provided through claims submitted. However this will **not always** reflect, or equate to, the total essential service activity which practices are providing e.g. repairs that may not be claimed for and which incur a direct physical patient contact.

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Q: Are the arrangements which I have in place for providing essential and urgent care adequate?

A: To date, many contractors have advised of their arrangements including opening days/hours, remote cover, telephone divert and other arrangements. If you are making a significant change to these arrangements which will impact on your capacity and capability to provide essential and urgent care you should notify the HSCB by email using [ophthalmic.services@hscni.net](mailto:ophthalmic.services@hscni.net)

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Q: Will I be reminded every week to complete my FSS monitoring return?

A: Yes, towards the end of each week HSCB will issue a short email reminding you that you need to complete the weekly FSS monitoring return. This should be completed by 5pm on the Monday of each week recording the activity for the previous week.

Occasionally in a specific week an additional question may be included which is relevant to service development during the COVID period.

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