

RCOphth response to DHSC: Extend medicines for optometrists and contact lens opticians

November 2025

In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

On behalf of an organisation

What is the name of the organisation you are responding on behalf of?

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists

What type of organisation are you responding on behalf of?

Professional membership body

Where does your organisation operate or provide services?

The whole of the UK | Outside the UK

What is your job title?

Policy Manager

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove these medicines from the HMRs on the basis that they have been discontinued and are no longer available to be sold or supplied in the UK?

Agree

Please provide further information to support your answer.

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Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply acetylcysteine in an emergency?

Agree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply atropine sulphate in an emergency?

Neither agree nor disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply homatropine hydrobromide in an emergency?

Neither agree nor disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply azelastine hydrochloride in an emergency?

Agree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply ketotifen in an emergency?

Agree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply olopatadine in an emergency?

Agree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply lodoxamide in an emergency?

Agree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply sodium cromoglycate in preparations that are larger than 10ml in an emergency?

Agree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply pilocarpine hydrochloride in an emergency?

Disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply pilocarpine nitrate in an emergency?

Disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply diclofenac sodium in an emergency?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please provide further information to support your answers.

"Pilocarpine - Pilocarpine was historically used in glaucoma treatment, but has now been replaced by a number of more effective alternatives. We do not envisage many scenarios when pilocarpine would be suitable, rather than immediate referral for treatment in the hospital eye service. In the rare situation when timely referral to the hospital eye service is not possible, there is limited benefit to using pilocarpine and has the risk to exacerbate other conditions.

Atropine and Homatropine - atropine and homatropine should be used only when cyclopentolate is not available, which is a safer medicine for dilation. We would like clarification supporting guidance/training that atropine should only be used for this second line usage.

Diclofenac sodium - The only licensed use for diclofenac is post-operative cataract treatment, where we have no concerns regarding usage by optometrists. However, this

medication has the potential to induce corneal melts in susceptible individuals and therefore any off-license usage by optometrists would be inappropriate."

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all CLOs to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply azelastine hydrochloride in an emergency?

Agree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all CLOs to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply ketotifen in an emergency?

Agree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all CLOs to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply olopatadine in an emergency?

Agree

Please provide further information to support your answers.

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Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply azithromycin in an emergency?

Neither agree nor disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply gentamicin in an emergency?

Neither agree nor disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all optometrists to provide a signed order for, or directly sell and supply epinastine in an emergency?

Agree

Please provide further information to support your answers.

"Azithromycin - azithromycin should only be used as a second line therapy, with chloramphenicol the preferred first line therapy. We recommend this is clarified in supporting guidance/training.

Gentamicin - gentamicin should only be used as a second line therapy, with chloramphenicol the preferred first line therapy. We recommend this is clarified in supporting guidance/training. In addition, we believe that the causative microbe should be identified before treatment with gentamicin begins, to limit the risk of unnecessary ocular toxicity. This testing is not currently available for many optometry practices, but if this testing was widely available for optometrists it would greatly reduce these risks."

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal that CLOs should be able to provide a signed order for or directly sell and supply gentamicin in an emergency?

Neither agree nor disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal that CLOs should be able to provide a signed order for or directly sell and supply epinastine in an emergency?

Agree

Please provide further information to support your answers.

Gentamicin - please see response to previous section.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow wholesale suppliers to supply CLOs with these 3 topical anaesthetics for use during the course of their professional practice?

Agree

Please provide further information to support your answer.

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Do you agree or disagree with the view of DHSC and DoH (NI) on the impact these policy proposals will have on individuals with protected characteristics?

Agree

Please provide further information to support your answer.

-

Do you agree or disagree with the view of DoH (NI) about the impact these policy proposals will have on where people live geographically in Northern Ireland?

Agree

Please provide further information to support your answer.

-

How did you hear about the consultation?

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How satisfied are you with the consultation process?

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Please explain your answer.

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