

GOC/COVID/14

Date of statement: 7 September 2020 (updated 28 May 2021)

General Optical Council (GOC) statement on service of registration notices during the COVID-19 emergency

This statement will apply in the **red**, **amber** and **green** phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, as defined by [The College of Optometrists' red-amber-green classification system](#).

Purpose of statement

1. The purpose of this statement is to set out how we will serve notices under the GOC Registration Rules 2005 ('Registration Rules') during the COVID-19 emergency.
2. In taking the steps set out below, we are putting our overarching objective under section 2A of the Opticians Act 1989 ('the Act') – the protection of the public – at the forefront of our efforts to continue maintaining our functions during this challenging period.

Service of registration notices

3. Rules 19-20 of the Registration Rules created requirements in respect of the service on registrants of notices relating to entry to, and removal from, the GOC's Register. Section 23A of the Act enabled the making of rules for electronic service where the person consents in writing. The General Optical Council (Committee Constitution, Registration and Fitness to Practise) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Rules 2020 amended the Registration Rules to permit service by email if that person has provided an email address for communications.
4. We will serve all notices in accordance with the amended Registration Rules and are currently finalising the details of an electronic service policy which will set out the safeguards that we will implement.
5. We will only serve notices, notifications and documents under our Registration Rules by email where the registrant has:
 - consented to this in writing; and
 - provided an email address for communications to be sent to.
6. Service is to the email address that the registrant has provided to us for the purpose of communication. We therefore ask all registrants to ensure that their contact details are up to date on their MyGOC account.

7. Where a registrant does not give consent to electronic service of statutory notices, or withdraws consent at a later date, we will serve notices in hard copy (usually by recorded delivery post) in accordance with the requirements of section 23A(1) of the Act.
8. Even where a registrant has already consented to electronic service, we will also arrange for a notice to be provided in hard copy if the registrant requests this at any time.