

# Merseyside Local Optical Committees

3 July 2020

## Management of patients in CCG areas without CUES

### Urgent and Emergency

NHS England have made it clear in their recent communications that the General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) should not be used to provide urgent or emergency eye care. Indeed, GOS claims will be rejected by payment agencies if inappropriate.

Your LOCs have worked hard to engage with the all Merseyside CCGs to establish the Covid-19 Urgent Eyecare Service (CUES). This pathway was written to provide patients with safe, easy, local access to urgent eye care through optical practices. The pathway is supported by The Royal College of Ophthalmologists, the College of Optometrists, and NHS England.

CUES is being mobilised in Halton, Sefton, Southport & Formby and St. Helens but despite our best efforts **there is no service provision yet for patients with a GP in Liverpool, Warrington or Knowsley.** So, A&E and the HES remain the patient's only viable option for urgent or emergency eye care and NHS minor eye care is only provided by GPs and pharmacists.

If a patient with a GP from these areas contacts your practice with acute onset symptoms, there is no NHS service you can provide them with. If optometrists or dispensing opticians play a part in triaging the patient, they will have established a duty of care, provided on a private basis. **Your LOCs advise using non-professional staff to signpost these patients to available NHS services.**

### Care navigation in optical practices:

- Ensure reception staff are fully informed about what aspects of eye care fall within the "Essential" definition with reference to the latest OFNC guidance
- **If a patient enquiry does not fall into the category of essential care, then signpost to the available NHS services without any element of triage**

NHS Services include:

- Pharmacy
- General Practitioner
- Accident & Emergency

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## Urgent and Emergency Referrals following an eye test

If an urgent or emergency referral condition is indicated, following a GOS or private examination **the Optometrist or Dispensing Optician should contact the Hospital Eye Service (HES) by telephone and follow their advice.**

## Non-urgent referrals

If a less urgent referral is indicated, following a GOS or private examination, you should refer to HES, as you would have done pre-COVID. However, you should be aware that access to HES will remain restricted for some time ahead.

## Cataract

Cataract providers are starting to accept referrals again, as they restart services. However, you should ensure patients are aware that anyone listed for elective surgery may need to isolate for 14 days prior to admission, along with the rest of their household. Also, waiting times for assessment and surgery are likely to be longer.

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*Bob*

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Central Mersey LOC

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