

Central Mersey Local Optical Committee

3 July 2020

Local protocol for patient management where CUES is commissioned (For patients with a GP in Halton or St Helens CCGs)

The Current local protocol is for all patients with a GP in Halton and St Helens who report acute onset ocular symptoms to be triaged under the COVID Urgent Eye Care Service (CUES) in due course.

- If you are providing CUES, follow the guidance sent to you by Primary Eye Care Services and manage the patient accordingly
- If you are not providing CUES and the patient has a GP in either Halton or St Helens, you should refer the patient to one of the CUES providers. A list of those practices currently providing the service can be found at: <http://primaryeyecare.co.uk/find-a-practice/>

NB If the patient has red flag symptoms, or clinical signs indicating a sight/life threatening condition, you should not delay and refer to HES immediately. Current HES arrangements are detailed below.

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. However, you should be aware that access to HES will remain restricted for some time ahead.

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Cataract

If a patient with a GP in Halton and St Helens has developed significant cataract, which may benefit from surgery, local protocol is for the patient to be assessed by the Pre-op Cataract assessment service. If you are not participating in this service, you should refer the patient to one of the providers, as per the list available at: <http://centralmerseyloc.org/community%20services/>

NHS trusts and alternative services, such as Spamedica, Spire or Fairfield, are taking referrals for cataract again. However, when considering referral, you should ensure patients are aware that anyone listed for elective surgery will 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, but we will keep you posted on that as we get further information.

Direct referrals

Both our local NHS trusts have been accepting referrals direct from optometrists for several years. If you have an NHS email address, your LOC advised you should send a PDF referral letter via NHS email, where possible. The LOC website has a fillable PDF version of the GOS18 referral form to download, or you could create a PDF from your practice administration software. In all cases, you should also send a copy to the patient's GP.

We are in talks with our local eye departments to update referral information, but details of current arrangements for can be found at: <http://centralmerseyloc.org/direct-referral/>

Bob Wilkes
Chair
Central Mersey LOC