

Merseyside Local Optical Committees

7 September 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 commissioned in Halton, South Sefton, Southport & Formby, St Helens and Warrington, but despite our best efforts **there is no service provision yet for patients with a GP in Liverpool 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:

If a patient with a Knowsley or Liverpool GP contacts your practice with acute eye problems, you will be unable to provide them with an NHS service. Therefore, your LOCs advise that you signpost to the available NHS services without any element of triage.

Services include:

- Pharmacy
- General Practitioner
- Accident & Emergency

Merseyside Local Optical Committees

Urgent and Emergency Referrals following an eye test

If a condition is identified, following a GOS or private examination, which requires urgent or emergency referral **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 per details for each local trust below. However, you should be aware that access to HES will remain restricted for some time ahead.

Cataract

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

Bob Wilkes

Bob

Chair
Central Mersey LOC

Paul Newell

Paul

Chair
Sefton LOC

Adam Ormrod

Adam

Chair
Liverpool LOC