

Central Mersey Local Optical Committee

21st October 2020

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

The Current local protocol is for all patients with a GP in Halton, St Helens and Warrington 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 latest Primary Eye Care Services Pathway and Protocol document and manage the patient according to College of Optometrists guidelines
- If you are not providing CUES and the patient has a GP in either Halton, St Helens, or Warrington, 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 as per details for each local trust. However, you should be aware that access to HES will remain restricted and waiting times longer 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 Spamedica are still taking referrals for cataract. However, when considering referral, 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, but we will keep you posted on that as we get further information.

If a patient with a GP in Knowsley or Warrington has developed significant cataract, which may benefit from surgery, you should refer either direct to a Cataract provider or indirectly to the GP for onward referral.

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, send a copy to the patient's GP.

Details of current arrangements for our local eye departments can be found at:
<http://centralmerseyloc.org/direct-referral/>

Bob Wilkes
Chair
Central Mersey LOC