

21st June 2021

Dear Colleague

UPDATE: Community Urgent Eyecare Service (CUES)

The Community Urgent Eyecare Service (CUES service) has now been in place now for a little while and is supporting patients with urgent eye care needs.

This service is commissioned by the CCG and is provided by local optical practices via the optometry federation, Primary Eyecare Services Ltd (PES) with the support of the Local Optical Committee. It is for all patients registered with a **Southampton, West Hampshire, Isle of Wight or North Hampshire CCG GP practice**.

The primary aim of this service has been to ensure people can access urgent eyecare within primary care, utilising the established trained workforce in optical practices. This is essential to reduce demand on primary care and hospital eye services. The service will provide initial contact, telephone triage, remote consultations/telemedicine and where necessary face to face assessments for patients with eye problems.

We offer a single point of access for patients referred to the service from non-participating optical practices, General Practice, Pharmacy and Hospital Services. Patients are able to contact our single point of access via phone on **0300 303 4922** from **9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday** or there is a list of accredited optical practices outside these times currently providing the service at www.primaryeyecare.co.uk using the 'Find a practice' tool.

When a patient contacts us via the single point of access they will be screened and then where appropriate have a telemedicine consultation arranged with one of our CUES optometrists. Where face to face appointments are required these will be arranged at a local participating optical practice in an appropriate timescale.

We would appreciate your support in promotion of the CUEs service to patients, to ensure we can support the wider healthcare system as much as possible during this difficult time. We have attached a printable CUEs Service patient and wall poster that can be displayed in you Pharmacy. We are also spreading the word via social media so if your Practice has a Twitter account that your patients frequent, please retweet the service information we post. Our Twitter handle is: @EyecareServices

We are very happy to answer any queries you or your colleagues may have about the service – please send any queries to hello@referral.support or Jane.Bell@primaryeyecare.co.uk

Yours sincerely,



Dharmesh Patel
Chief Executive Officer
Primary Eyecare Services

Urgent Eyecare Service (CUES)

Inclusion criteria & Red Flags

The aim of the Covid-19 Urgent Eyecare Service (CUES) is to ensure people can access urgent eyecare within primary care during the coronavirus pandemic. **Presenting symptoms will typically include a red or painful eye, foreign body, sudden changes in vision, or flashes and floaters.**

Patients with any of the following symptoms should be sent directly to the emergency eye service at the hospital:

- **Chemical or penetrating injury**
- **Severe pain**
- **Sudden complete loss of vision in last few hours.**

Referral & Entry points

Patients will be able to contact our single point of access on **0300 303 4922** from 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday or outside these times see our list of accredited optical practices currently providing the service at www.primaryeyecare.co.uk.

Access to the service is restricted to telephone booking only to:

- Identify people with Covid-19 symptoms, at risk /self-isolating people to signpost to appropriate services
- Offer telephone/ video consultation and self-care advice or provide signed orders remotely, where appropriate
- Offer face to face appointments with optometrist where required for those who are presenting with urgent and higher risk symptoms (observing PPE guidance and social distancing advice)
- Signposting to emergency services where appropriate.

Consultation outcomes

- The practitioner manages the condition and offers the patient advice and/or prescribes/recommends medication. Management may include a minor clinical procedure e.g. foreign body removal. A remote follow-up consultation may be necessary.
- Referral to eye casualty at the local hospital eye service.
- The condition (and subsequent referral) is non-urgent and is safely delayed until following the pandemic. A further appointment is recommended e.g. 4-6 months.
- The practitioner has concerns that the patient may have a systemic condition and makes a referral to their GP.
- Patient referred non-urgently for further investigation and/or treatment in line with local referral pathways and protocols. Managing the patient expectations relating to appointment availability in the current pandemic.
- Where appropriate patients given advice on self-care.

Supply & Use of Medicines following consultation

- Where a medicine is required, this will normally be supplied or prescribed by the optometrist, as part of the consultation, through the issue of a private signed order for supply by the community pharmacist of the patient's choice; or by directly supplying or selling (where appropriate), "Pharmacy only" (P) medicines and General Sales List (GSL) medicines, and the following POMs: chloramphenicol, cyclopentolate hydrochloride, fusidic acid and tropicamide.
- Independent optometrist prescribers will ideally have access to FP10 prescription, for dispensing by a community pharmacist.
- An approved list of medicines has been agreed. All participating clinicians will only prescribe, supply or issue signed orders for medicines included on the approved formulary, unless there is a clinical reason not to do so.