

Date

Dear Optometrist,

### **IMPORTANT: TO NOTE AND FOR ACTION**

#### **Referrals to Ophthalmology Outpatient Services in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust**

Following a public consultation last year on the development of Ophthalmic Clinical Centres (OCCs) in Northern, Southern and South Eastern Local Commissioning Group/Trust areas, an Ophthalmic Clinical Centre has been established in the Ballymena Health and Care Centre.

As part of these proposals, a centralised booking process for all Ophthalmology Outpatient clinics delivered by the Belfast Trust is being implemented. Some benefits that this will provide are:

- Greater equity in waiting times across Trust sites
- Choice for patients in terms of outpatient attendance location, date and time of their outpatient appointment
- Single/fewer points of contact for patients, GPs and other clinicians, making contact with the Trust easier

**In order to facilitate centralised referral management and booking of NHSCT Ophthalmology patients, from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017, please take note of the following information and advice on referral pathway for your patients.**

➤ **For Electronic Referrals via Clinical Communications Gateway (CCG):**

You should refer your patients that you would normally have sent to **Antrim Area Hospital** and who require Ophthalmology and Optometry (Contact Lens) services to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Royal Victoria Hospital. The options for all Ophthalmology referrals and Optometry Contact Lens are all hosted under the Royal Victoria Hospital destination on CCG.

**Please note:**

1. Referrals to Ophthalmology and Optometry Contact Lens and Low Vision in Causeway Hospital **are not affected** by this change.
2. The only option which will be available at Antrim Area Hospital on CCG is for Optometry – Low Vision. Please continue to refer your Low Vision patients to the Antrim Area Hospital Option on CCG.

➤ **For Paper Referrals from practices not using Electronic Referral via CCG:**

You should continue to send referrals via GP as you currently do, using the correct referral forms e.g. Cataract referral form , Rapid Access Macular referral form (for wAMD/RVO/DMO), Glaucoma G1 referral form or, the OHT1 referral form. Depending on your location the GP will scan and attach your referral form and send via CCG to the appropriate location and clinic as dictated by your referral and the information provided clearly on the referral.

If you have any queries about this, or about Ophthalmology referrals/appointments, please contact the RVH Ophthalmology booking office on **028 90634700**.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Stephen Boyd  
Co-Director, Specialist Services  
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust



Mr Raymond Curran  
Head of Ophthalmic Services  
Health and Social Care Board