

Optometry Bulletin No: 13**13 May 2021**

The Health and Social Care Board continue to extend thanks to all ophthalmic contractors and their staff working in primary care for their dedication to eyecare provision at this time. A rhythm has developed in the way we now work and whilst it is hoped that this rhythm will be steady and may undergo more refinement, the past year has taught us all that we need to be ready to respond to change and to be creative and proactive in how approach change.

Thank you again for your continued care for patients at this time, your energy and efforts are valued by Ophthalmic Services and by the wider HSC system.

Lateral Flow Tests for Primary Care Optometry Contractor practices

Primary care Optometry contractors were recently surveyed to help gather baseline information for the planning of the supply of Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) for use by staff in optometry contractor practices; thank you to all practices that responded to this survey.

A letter was issued from HSCB on Tuesday (11th May) to all contractors explaining the process. Please [read the letter](#) which is hosted on the COVID-19 information webpage (key information section):

<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3120.htm>

LFTs will be supplied by a company called 'Salesforce' and your practice will be contacted by Salesforce by email to progress the arrangements for access to LFTs by staff in your practice. Contractors are responsible for the appropriate use of the LFTs by all staff.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): HSC funded eye services

Contractors and individual Optometrists should continue to enforce robust IPC measures within their practices and during the provision of eyecare services. The advice in relation to PPE and when it should be worn remains unchanged. Please contact ophthalmic.services@hscni.net should you have any queries in regard to the recent reimbursement process for PPE.

**** Reminder** ---- Optometry Contractor Annual Returns**

All contractors are reminded of the need to complete and return the following practice returns by the deadline noted in the recent communication which was issued to practices on 28th April 2021.

1. Annual QA return

All contractors are asked to complete their QA return by **17th May 2021**. Submission of a complete quality assurance return by this date will ensure that payment of the practice allowance can be processed.

2. Enhanced Services: 2021-22 Declaration

All contractor practices are required to complete their enhanced services return for the 2021-22 year. Failure to submit a completed return by **17th May 2021** will result in the removal of the practice from the list of approved providers for the relevant service.

Remote Consultations

Remote consultations should still be considered as a viable option for eyecare provision where it is safe and appropriate. Guidance and resources to help practitioners in providing remote consultations and care is available from the College of Optometrists ([click here to access](#))

It is observed that patient feedback from the use of effective remote consultations across NHS/HSC is evidenced as good, and remote consultations offer significant potential to change and transform how care can be provided going forward. Contractors can claim for remote consultations using the online eForm hosted on the HSC Optometry Portal under the link titled “**Optometry eForms**” (section B on the page).

Post-Operative Cataract Pathway Update

Work is continuing to implement the post-operative cataract review service. Processes are being tested within the Trusts and when these are finalised the Medisoft training (postponed from 4th May) will be rearranged. A new date for this training and further information and guidance on the new service will be issued to practices shortly.

Anyone still needing to undertake the WOPEC cataract training module to enable them to provide the service should email ophthalmic.services@hscni.net as there are still some HSCB funded places available.

If it is some time since you did the cataract module you may review the training lectures using your original WOPEC access code if you wish to. If any problems with this please contact WOPEC by email: wopec@cardiff.ac.uk

Important Upcoming HSCB Ophthalmic Service Webinar: Cataract Pathway

Monday 7th June 2021 at 9am

Miss Julie Silvestri, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, Belfast HSCT and **Clinical Lead for the Northern Ireland Eyecare Network** will discuss developments in the Northern Ireland Post-Operative Cataract Pathway. Register for the event:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6070438196142213134>

Learning from, and Reflecting on, Adverse Incidents

An important component part of good governance and continued personal & professional development relates to learning from incidents and how we reflect on and apply the learning from them in our clinical practice. The following incident affords an opportunity for all Optometrists to review and reflect on the area of paediatric optometry. It should aid personal reflection on your clinical practice to help identify if there are components or elements of the care you currently provide which need to be reviewed and improved.

Clinical Scenario..... What will you learn and take from the following incident?

Initial presentation.....

A 9yr old child was prescribed a high myopic prescription by an Optometrist and as it was a high RX and first time RX (in the order of -8 DS with a cyl component), a recall date of 4 months was assigned. The refraction was not undertaken using cycloplegia. The child attended a second Optometrist in a different practice 4 months later at which time the RX was increased by almost-1D in both eyes and a referral generated to Orthoptic services because of concerns about reduced vision and esophoria.

Subsequent findings....

The child was seen by Orthoptic services approximately 6-7 months later and was found to be emmetropic following optometric and orthoptic assessment in the hospital eye service. The Trust contacted a Health and Social Care Board clinical adviser in regard to concerns about the previous eye examinations. The Trust provided HSCB with information on the background and context to the incident.

Actions taken by the HSCB, Trust and Optometry practices involved and the outcomes....

- ✓ An adverse incident was reported by both Optometrists in each of the two Optometry practices.
- ✓ The HSCB requested clinical records and examined these in conjunction with the findings of a further repeat cycloplegic assessment which they requested to be performed by a different Optometrist working in the Trust.
- ✓ Findings confirmed that the child was emmetropic and that they did not have a high myopic refractive error.
- ✓ The Trust discussed the findings with the parent/guardian of the child; this is an essential part of adverse incident processes where service user engagement must take place.
- ✓ A review of a sample of patients (children) examined by each of the Optometrists took place and no errors in prescribing were noted with the recording of the clinical assessments and tests completed deemed to be of an appropriate standard.

It was not possible to attribute ***with certainty*** one or more specific cause of the issue of the incorrect RX by two separate Optometrists and administrative issues may have played a part in the error(s). Possible clinical scenarios which may have played a part in the errors have been explored and discussed at length with both Optometrists involved in the incident and reflection and learning have been generated. In this instance the parent/guardian accepted that an error had occurred involving two different Optometrists, they were reassured that their child did not need spectacles and satisfied that the issue had been investigated with important learning generated for both Optometrists **and** the wider Optometric profession locally. Whilst on this occasion the patient did not have an adverse outcome, this incident serves to remind **all Optometrists** of the importance of; robust clinical assessment, recording of all findings and the checking and validation of clinical recommendations and record keeping (including the review and comparison with previous notes where they exist) to ensure that errors do not happen.

What is the learning from this incident and how can you mitigate against the scenario where an incorrect RX is prescribed for a child?.....

Some clinical considerations.....

- ✓ In this incident the clinical records did not **evidence** that retinoscopy was performed. The retinoscopy reflex is a key indicator not only of refractive error but potential corneal and other problems/issues. Where a retinoscopy reflex appears unusual or, not as anticipated, it should make you think – why, what could be the cause and how should I investigate this further?
- ✓ In this incident a cycloplegic refraction was **not** performed by either Optometrist. Whilst there may be a few justifiable exceptions, the vast majority of children who attend for their first eye examination with you should have a cycloplegic refraction performed as part of the assessment. This is irrespective of their age or apparent level of co-operation / ability to participate in tasks.
- ✓ If you do not routinely undertake cycloplegic refraction in your assessment of children you should reflect on the reason why and take measures to address and acquire this essential skill. If you are unable to perform the cycloplegic examination you should seek peer assistance and consider asking a colleague in practice to perform the cycloplegic examination.
- ✓ It is important that you have access to a range of tests to assess vision and to measure acuity taking into account and choosing the test which is appropriate and tailored for the child's age and other considerations relating to ability to participate and respond.

Some administrative/process considerations

- ✓ Double and triple check that everything “add up”, tests, findings, actions and your notes.....if they do not then find out why.
- ✓ Check the final RX, notes, GOS V, dispensing order etc....
- ✓ On collection of children's spectacles, staff involved in the supply and fitting should always check with the child if they are able to see with their spectacles as expected.

Resources to help....

- ✓ The College of Optometrists guidance in relation to examining young children – [at this link](#) is a valuable information resource and tool for Optometrists. Please revisit this guidance and reflect on whether you apply this in your clinical assessment of children. It is ‘good food for thought’.....
- ✓ The recent key note lecture by Dr Rowan Candy from the College of Optometrists Optometry Bitesize 2021 titled “Is this young child going to be at risk for strabismus or amblyopia?” is an excellent webinar and well worth watching.
- ✓ Post graduate education and training – if you are interested, examining many children in your practice and/or feeling that your knowledge and skill could be enhanced, you could consider undertaking some additional training. There are many resources which you can look into such as those provided by the College of Optometrists – please [visit the website](#) to find out more about the College library, video lectures, DOCET, webinars, [Professional Certificate in Paediatric Eyecare](#)

Be curious, Be open, Be willing, Be the best you can be.

Training: Opportunities & Resources

Please note the following training opportunities and resources relevant to your clinical practice:

1. Level I Enhanced Service (IOP Repeat Measures)

Optometrists who have not as yet undertaken the training to be accredited for the Level I ES (IOP Repeat Measures) now have further opportunity to become accredited to provide the service. Two assessment dates have been arranged with Ulster University who are the training partners for this service – the first will be held in early July and the second in mid-August.

Please read the information on this training opportunity hosted at the following link: [click here to read](#). Please share this information with any Optometrists in your practice (full time, part time or locum) who may wish to avail of this training opportunity.

2. HSC Webinar Recordings

A recording of the recent webinar held on 11th May 2021 on ‘*Cataracts – How optometry can aid management*’ is available on the Optometry CPD and Training webpage at the following link:

<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2961.htm>

Please take some time to watch this and other recordings if you were unable to join the live events.

3. eLearning Opportunity

COVID-19 has taken a toll on both the physical and mental health of people. Health Education England e-Learning for Healthcare has added a new e-learning session to its adult Suicide and Self-harm Prevention module within the ‘MindEd’ programme. This new session titled “*Postvention Support for Staff and Organisational Response*” helps learners gain an understanding of the impact of bereavement by suicide on family, colleagues and friends including during the COVID-19 pandemic by following the story of two people affected by a suicide.

The Suicide and Self-harm Prevention module, which is **free to access**, offers guidance and advice to anyone who is directly involved with caring for or in contact with those who have suicidal ideas, with or without self-harm, or those who self-harm, with or without current suicidal ideas. This could include health and care professionals, parents, carers and teachers. As Optometrists you may be placed in a position where a patient confides in you in regard to their feelings and this eLearning may be helpful for you in your practice.

'MindEd' is a free educational resource for mental health support. The variety of free resources aims to provide adults, across professions and organisations and including parents and carers, with the knowledge to support wellbeing, the understanding to identify young and older people at risk of a mental health condition and the confidence to act on their concern and, if needed, signpost to services that can help.

For more information about MindEd visit: <https://www.minded.org.uk/>

For more information and to access the specific new learning, visit the [Postvention Support for Staff and Organisational Response session](#).

Communications: HSCNI email

All contractors that use the online ophthalmic claims system (OCS) have been provided with a HSCNI email account. This is the primary means of communication used by HSCB. Please ensure that if you use the OCS that you check your practice HSCNI email account daily.

Some Contractors and individual practitioners have queried why HSCB include hyperlinks to guidance or other information rather than attaching the original document to an email. Attachments take up a lot of mailbox 'space' in the email inbox and the inbox can quickly 'fill up' and exceed the permitted limit causing new emails not to be received. Providing information through links avoids this problem. In addition where updates are required to important information, these can be made to the original online document and are easily accessed – this reduces the risk of documentation which is printed or held as an attachment being used when it is no longer current.

- **Please check your HSCNI email and delete any emails and information which you no longer need, and save to your computer/device any information which you specifically need and wish to retain. This will ensure there is 'space' for new communications.**
- **Please check your HSCNI email account daily.**

**** **Ophthalmic Advice and Support** ****

If you have a query you can receive advice from the following HSC Staff:

- Janice McCrudden:
janice.mccrudden@hscni.net
- Fiona North:
fiona.north@hscni.net
- Margaret McMullan:
margaret.mccullan@hscni.net
- Scott Drummond:
scott.drummond@hscni.net
- Ophthalmic Services email:
ophthalmic.services@hscni.net



COVID-19 Pandemic Online Resources:

- **HSC Optometry COVID-19 information:**
Current page: <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3120.htm>
Archive page: <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3225.htm>
- **COVID-19 Public Health Agency:**
<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/>
- **General Optical Council:**
https://www.optical.org/en/news_publications/Publications/joint-statement-and-guidance-on-coronavirus-covid19.cfm
- **College of Optometrists:** <https://www.college-optometrists.org/the-college/media-hub/news-listing/coronavirus-2019-advice-for-optometrists.html>
- **Association of Optometrists:**
<https://www.aop.org.uk/coronavirus-updates>
- **Health and Safety Executive** [Coronavirus: latest information and advice - HSE news](#)