

FOR ACTION & INFORMATION

**TO: OPTOMETRY CONTRACTOR
PRACTICES USING THE
'OPTOMETRY-VIEW' NIECR**

25th August 2021

Dear Colleague

NIECR GUIDANCE: Patient Access Requests

Optometrists are reminded that NIECR is in place to support direct clinical care for your patients and the following guidance is in place to support **Community Optometrists and Pharmacists in regard to patient access requests for NIECR information.**

Individuals are legally entitled to obtain a copy of information held about them. However there is an obligation, in order to protect both service users and service providers, to provide clear arrangements and a set process for handling a request for access to any medical information. If you receive a request to see or access information which you feel is outside the ordinary remit of the service you are providing in your professional capacity it is advised that, as a first step, you direct the patient to make an informal approach to their GP or Trust. This is because Pharmacists and Optometrists have only limited access to ECR, whereas the Trusts and GP can provide a full and complete picture.

There is a formal process for accessing NIECR, and again this should be through the GP Practice or the HSC Trust. In most cases, the deadline for response will be one calendar month, although this can be extended to 3 months where a request is deemed 'complex'. More information is provided in the [NIECR Privacy Notice](#).

Optometrists are reminded that they should not access their own NIECR

All NIECR information and training resources are hosted at the following link:
<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2974.htm>

***PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DISSEMINATE THIS INFORMATION TO ALL
OPTOMETRISTS USING NIECR IN YOUR PRACTICE***

If you have any queries in relation to this information please contact
ophthalmic.services@hscni.net in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Ophthalmic Services

Directorate of Integrated Care, Health and Social Care Board