



Modernisation and Reform; an opportunity to do things differently

As the entire health and care system grapples with balancing need, demand and supply you will have noticed that your patients and service users are, quite rightly, demanding more: better access, modern technologies, and improved quality and outcomes.

This is not, of course, peculiar to eyecare and the perfect storm of an aging population, new technologies and treatments, and increasing patient expectations is putting healthcare systems under pressure. To cope with this demand, all services and pathways need to modernise, adapt, and co-ordinate to improve both access and outcomes.

Minister O'Neill will articulate the outworking of a HSC expert panel led by Prof Bengoa in due course, and outline her vision for an inclusive, effective and outcomes-focused health and care system.

The products emanating from "Developing Eyecare Partnerships" should show our regional eyecare provision to be at the vanguard of this new way of planning and delivering care. By expanding capacity and capability in primary care optometry, improving the interface and communication between primary and secondary care, and introducing reform and innovation into secondary care, our modernisation for improved prevention, promotion, access and outcomes is already paying dividends.

In this Newsletter you will read of expanding primary care capabilities (through acute eye care and independent prescribing), improving interfaces and patient safety (through eReferral and eTriage), and working smarter through collaboration and networks, such as Project ECHO®.

Enjoy this update and, as always, thank you for delivering the vision.

Raymond Curran

Features in September Issue

- *Competency Framework for Prescribers
- *Northern Ireland Formulary
- * IP Optometrists in Training
- *World Sight Day
- *RNIB:Sight Loss Video Resource "HowISee"
- * Smoking Cessation Brief Intervention Training
- * Learning Disability—Best Practice Guidance & Recommendations
- * Optometrist Legal Case "Gross Negligence Manslaughter"
- *ICC Beech Hall Health & Well Being Centre
- *Annual Quality Assurance Returns 2015/16—Complaints, Adverse Incident Reporting and Guidance
- * ECHO update
- * Clinical Audit
- * Professional Certificate in Paediatric Eye Care/low vision
- * Electronic Referrals

OPTOMETRY PRESCRIBING UPDATES

Competency Framework For Prescribers

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) has published a new, updated and restructured Competency Framework for all Prescribers. The RPS worked collaboratively with the College of Optometrists, all the prescribing professions, and patients.



The competency framework outlines a common set of key competencies central to effective performance needed by all prescribers, regardless of their professional background. The framework helps support healthcare professionals to be safe, effective prescribers. It can be used by any prescriber to underpin professional responsibility for prescribing and also by regulators, education providers and professional organisations to inform guidance and advice. It will also help patients and carers identify good prescribing practice.

The framework sets out ten competencies, focused on the consultation process and prescribing governance, within which are statements describing the activity or outcomes prescribers should be able to demonstrate.

<http://www.rpharms.com/unsecure-support-resources/prescribing-competency-framework.asp>



Northern Ireland Formulary

Developing Eyecare Partnerships (DEP) Task Group 4 have recently completed a piece of work to develop a chapter for the Northern Ireland Formulary on Dry Eye preparations and information in regard to treatment of Glaucoma.



The link below will take you to the Chapter 11 Eye. This chapter provides information and advice/recommendations in respect of prescribing for Dry Eye and information on the treatment of Glaucoma. The Health and Social Care Board ask that you take note of this chapter and refer to it in the course of your clinical care. Please follow the link or click [here](#).

<http://niformulary.hscni.net/Formulary/Adult/11.0/Pages/default.aspx>

Practices will receive a printed copy of Formulary guidance; please retain this in your consulting room for easy reference when you are assessing patients for dry eye and making recommendations for treatment of their condition.

IP Optometrists in Training

Objective 10 of Developing Eyecare Partnerships provides the mandate for the Health and Social Care Board to progress work to promote Independent Prescribing by Optometrists. Task Group 1 of Developing Eyecare Partnerships has worked with the Western and Belfast Health and Social Care Boards to develop a framework for access to clinical placements for IP Optometrists in training.

It is anticipated that in the first instance 4/5 places for the clinical placements will be available across both HSC Trusts and that placements will be available in a rolling cycle. Optometrists who wish to access the clinical placements will be required to go through an open application process and the fees are expected to be in the region of £1,200 for the 24 clinical placement sessions required for the IP qualification. Further details will be available in the incoming months.



MARK THE DAY

WORLD SIGHT DAY 13th OCTOBER 2016

World Sight Day is on 13th October 2016 and it is an opportunity to highlight and raise global awareness of blindness and visual impairment. The theme for World Sight Day 2016 is 'Stronger Together' with an emphasis on collaboration for all the stakeholders who are important for successful delivery eye care including; ophthalmologists, optometrists, ophthalmic nurses, donors, patients, carers and wider family members.



The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) provide resources which you can use within your practice to promote and highlight [World Sight Day](#). This year the IAPB are encouraging amateur and professional photographers around the world to support World Sight Day in highlighting the impact of eye health in people's lives, by taking part in an [International Photography Competition](#) with theme, 'Stronger Together' <http://photocomp.iapb.org/>

You are encouraged to support World Sight Day and to use the opportunity in your practice to highlight blindness and visual impairment including the modifiable factors which your patients can take control of such as; smoking cessation and dietary interventions which are effective in guarding against macular degeneration.

RNIB: Sight Loss Video Resource "HowISee"

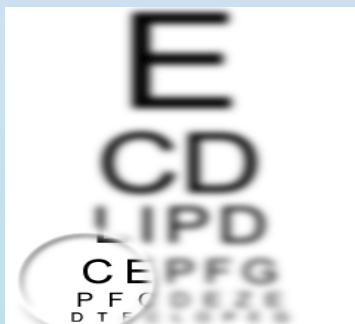
The RNIB have launched a short film called "[HowISee](#)". The short film has been developed as resource to help dispel the misconceptions around sight loss and visual impairment. The short film features five visually impaired people sharing their experiences of sight loss, one of the contributors is an athlete who participated in the 2012 Paralympic Games.

You can view the short film at <http://www.rnib.org.uk/howisee>

SMOKING CESSATION: BRIEF INTERVENTION TRAINING

On 20th June 2016, the Health and Social Care Board in conjunction with the Public Health Agency held a second CET approved training session in Brief Intervention for stopping Smoking.

This CET approved training is aimed at providing optometrists and dispensing opticians with the necessary skill and knowledge to provide brief intervention in smoking cessation for their patients. Those who attended the training felt it was valuable and informative and they were accredited with one interactive CET point approved by the GOC.



The link between smoking and sight loss is well evidenced and documented in the literature and as professionals it is important that you make every contact count with your patients.

The Public Health Agency have resources and literature which you can access for patients in helping them to stop smoking, please view the [website](http://www.want2stop.info/) for further details:



<http://www.want2stop.info/>

If you are interested in attending the CET approved training please contact margaret.mcmullan@hscni.net / 028 9536 3239

LEARNING DISABILITY – FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Colleagues are encouraged to read the recently published [framework document](#) in relation to eyecare provision in special schools.

The Framework was developed with input from many key stakeholders including; The British and Irish Orthoptic Society (BIOS), The College of Optometrists and the Royal College of Ophthalmologists.

Although many of the references in the document relate to evidence gathered within England the advice and guidance for organisations who commissioning eyecare services and for individuals and groups who provide eyecare for children with learning disabilities is relevant.



You are encouraged to read the framework <http://www.college-optometrists.org/en/utilities/document-summary.cfm/docid/87A8C388-3B33-4D9F-9AF709A99131CAFF> and adopt the areas of best practice which you feel you can implement in provision of eye care to patients who have a learning disability. This framework provides recommendations on best practice which all those involved in care should aspire.

In addition SeeAbility provides useful information and resources for ophthalmic professionals which you can access on <https://www.seeability.org/>

OPTOMETRIST LEGAL CASE – JULY 2016

"GROSS NEGLIGENCE MANSLAUGHTER"

Optometrists in Northern Ireland may be aware of the recent coverage in the media and optical press in relation to the [conviction of an optometrist](#) for 'gross negligence manslaughter' for failure to detect papilloedema.

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust have produced guidance for paediatric ophthalmology which an optometrist may find helpful in their clinical practice; this guidance was sent from the Health and Social Care Board to all Optometry practices in December 2015.

The guidance can be accessed on the [Paediatric Eyecare](#) link on the BSO website or [click here](#). Optometrists may also contact any one of the HSCB Clinical Optometric Advisers for further advice.

INTEGRATED CARE CLINIC (ICC) BEECH HALL HEALTH & WELL BEING CENTRE BELFAST

Practitioners in the Greater Belfast Area are encouraged to make use of the Integrated Care Clinic for patients with minor conditions including Blepharitis, Conjunctivitis, Dry Eye, Episcleritis, Chalazions and Lid Cysts.



Patients may be referred directly to Beech Hall via:

- CCG i.e. via electronic referral for those practices who will be enabled access to the CCG following recent training
- GOS18 Referral via the GP

For a full list of conditions that are appropriate for referral to the ICC clinic please refer to:

- The Ophthalmology Referral Pathway Poster which was issued recently to all practices (available at this link <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2485.htm>) or,
- The guidance hosted on the ClinicalCommunications Gateway/ eReferral Protocol – “Belfast Health and Social Care Trust>Royal Victoria Hospital>Ophthalmology – Integrated Care Clinic” advice page.

You may already be aware of Beech Hall as other HES services provided there include community orthoptic clinics and refraction clinics.



GOVERNANCE UPDATE

GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES

Annual Quality Assurance Returns 2015/16

The Health and Social Care Board would like to thank the Optometry Practices who made their Annual Quality Assurance Return for 2015/16. In April of each year the HSCB ask Ophthalmic Contractors to undertake a brief quality assurance process covering the following areas:

- Complaints
- Adverse Incidents
- Receipt, Dissemination & Implementation of MOS and Ophthalmic Guidance
- Business Continuity Planning



This year 232 optometry practices submitted their QA return for 2015/16, a return rate of 86.9%.

1. Complaints Reporting

Optometry Practices by LCG Area (n=267)	% of overall practices in Northern Ireland	% of practices in LCG which made a QA return for 2015/16	No of practices in LCG that reported one or more complaints in 2015/16
Belfast LCG	22%	71%	2
Northern LCG	28%	93%	2
Southern LCG	17%	91.5%	3
South Eastern LCG	18%	89%	5
Western LCG	15%	85%	2

2. Adverse Incident Reporting

Adverse Incident reporting plays an important part of health and social care's safety and learning culture. The aim of encouraging practices to report incidents is to identify learning, share good practice and improve quality of care and to prevent recurrence where possible. Seven [Adverse Incidents](#) were reported across six Optometry practices. Practices are reminded of the need to report Adverse Incidents and to retain a log of these for future reference. For further information please follow the link <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2563.htm>

**YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT FOR THIS IMPORTANT OPHTHALMIC
GOVERNANCE PROCESS IS APPRECIATED – THANK YOU**

Internal Audit—General Ophthalmic Services

In May 2016, Internal Audit in the Business Services Organisation undertook an audit of the HSCB processes for Quality Assurance in General Ophthalmic Services. The audit reviewed key governance areas and auditors undertook 11 practice visits. Several recommendations were made for areas where improvements could be made:

- Practices need to be aware of their responsibilities under “Complaints in Health & Social Care: Standards and Guidelines for Resolution and Learning (April 2009)” http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/HSC_complaints_standards_and_guidelines_Aug_10.pdf
- The recording of the nature of complaints, that is, identifying if complaints are “formal” or “informal”.
- Practitioners should **retain evidence** that staff have received, read and understood guidance issued by the HSCB via HSCB Guidance letters and Memorandum of Ophthalmic Services (MOS).
- Practice Business Continuity/Emergency Plans should be formally documented and reviewed regularly.

Thank you to those practices who facilitated the visit of the Internal Audit team from the Business Services Organisation.

**Updated Guidance for the Management of Serious Adverse Incidents -
Service User/Carer Involvement**

The HSCB have updated the guidance relating to service user/carers involvement in the reporting of Serious Adverse Incidents. A guidance letter has been issued to all GOS Contractors in August 2016 and you are asked to take note of this guidance and supporting literature. The guidance has been developed specifically to assist family practitioner staff to understand the adverse incident system and to engage and communicate with the service user / family / carers following a Serious Adverse Incident. Please follow the link to read more information on [Serious Adverse Incidents and Adverse Incidents](#).

NICE (PUBLIC HEALTH) CLINICAL GUIDELINE NG13

The Department of Health have recently reviewed and determined that “NICE Public Health Guideline NG13 [Workplace health: management practices](#)” is applicable in Northern Ireland. The guideline makes recommendations for employers in designing and delivering services that will help improve the health and wellbeing of employees. Please review the information on NICE Guideline NG13 at: <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2376.htm>

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NORTHERN IRELAND ... CPD ALERT!!!

PROJECT ECHO®

Ophthalmic Services within the Health and Social Care Board are delighted to advise that following a very successful Project ECHO® pilot earlier this year that two further ECHO® Knowledge Networks have been selected to be part of the Northern Ireland ECHO® Network. The ECHO® Knowledge Networks will each offer nine ECHO® sessions between September 2016 and April 2017.



Optometrists in primary care will have the opportunity each month to engage face-to-face via remote tele-links with secondary care ophthalmologists, clinical and academic scientists and other professionals who have an interest and input into ophthalmic service provision. ECHO® affords a unique opportunity to; share clinical knowledge and experiences, enhance relationships and build the foundations for opportunities for individuals to be involved in further service development.



The Optometry/Ophthalmology Knowledge Networks are free to participate in and they are:

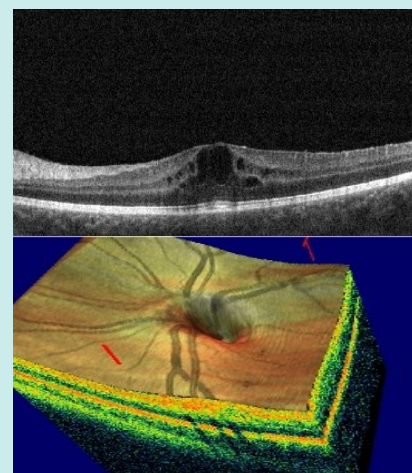
Glaucoma and Macular

Acute Eye

ECHO® will support the governance and quality assurance of Optometry Local Enhanced Services for those who are involved in the Knowledge Network and ECHO® Optometrists will gain from direct '1-1' contact with specialists and their peers in an interactive, dynamic and enjoyable way.

Next Steps....

The Health and Social Care Board hope to use the 2016/17 Glaucoma and Macular ECHO® project to establish a network of ophthalmic professionals who can be involved in the further work of [Developing Eyecare Partnerships](#) to plan and develop services for the glaucoma and macular care pathways.



CLINICAL AUDIT – THE COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS

Clinical Audit is a valuable tool which Optometrists are increasingly advised to use as part of clinical governance for your professional practice. Clinical Audit is required to provide assurance that the standards of clinical care, service quality and improvement are consistently maintained and improved where necessary. The College of Optometrists have launched online [Clinical Audit training](#) and 6 interactive CET points are available for members who complete this training and carry out their own simple audit in practice. Please [log in](#) to the College website for further information: <http://www.collegeoptometrists.org/en/CPD/online-learning/clinical-audit-onlinetrainingindex.cfm>



ULSTER UNIVERISTY: OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER TRAINING & EDUCATION

Colleagues may have noted the recent approval of two new higher education qualifications provide by the University of Ulster.

The Professional Certificate in Paediatric Eye Care



The Professional Certificate in Paediatric Eye Care provides Optometrists with the knowledge to support evidence-based eye care for infants and children of all ages. The course has been designed so that it can be undertaken entirely though distance learning, thus providing busy practitioners from all over the UK and beyond an opportunity to gain this higher qualification utilising modern web-based learning tools, including online tutorials.

The Professional Certificate in Low Vision



The Professional Certificate in Low Vision has been developed to provide Optometrists with up-to-date knowledge in holistic low vision care in either hospital or community optometry for non-complex cases.

Both of these new higher qualifications are strongly linked to Ulster University's Optometry and Vision Science clinical and research expertise. These new Professional Certificates add to the portfolio of College accredited Higher Qualifications in optometry offered by Ulster University; the Professional Certificates in Glaucoma and Medical Retina.

For further information about any of the courses offered by Ulster University please contact Dr Julie-Anne Little ja.little@ulster.ac.uk

ELECTRONIC REFERRALS: ACCESS TO THE CLINICAL COMMUNICATIONS GATEWAY

From previous issues of the HSCB Optometry Practice Newsletter you will be aware that Optometrists will soon be enabled to generate electronic referrals via the **Clinical Communications Gateway (CCG)**.

The CCG is the mechanism whereby GPs refer their patients to secondary care and Optometrists are the second group of primary care professionals to gain access to the CCG from their practices.



REFERRALS



Optometry practices who currently access the FPS Optometry portal for the submission of GOS claims electronically will be the first co-hort of practices to access electronic referral via the CCG. Practices that do not currently access the FPS Optometry portal will require connectivity to the HSC Network established before electronic referrals can be enabled and this work will be undertaken in phase two of the project (late 2016/early 2017).

Practices that are being offered access to electronic referral in phase 1 of the project were contacted in June 2016 in regard to the mandatory training in the use of the CCG. The Health and Social Care Board have begun the process of training optometrists and it is hoped that by mid-September many practices will be in a position to refer their patients to secondary care – directly and electronically. Electronic referral offers any benefits for patients and practitioners alike and affords the opportunity to streamline the patient journey in a safe and efficient manner.

Next steps.....

In time the Health and Social Care Board would aspire to further enhance the patient pathway by offering practitioners tools to assist in 'decision making' such as 'referral for advice'. In addition the electronic triage (eTriage) function will ensure timely and efficient triage of all referrals by secondary care clinicians. The Health and Social Care Board are also working with the eHealth team in HSC to enable read-only access to the Northern Ireland Electronic Care Record (NIECR) by Optometrists.