

Keeping your eyes,
and your sight, healthy

#EyecareWeCare



Look after your eyes

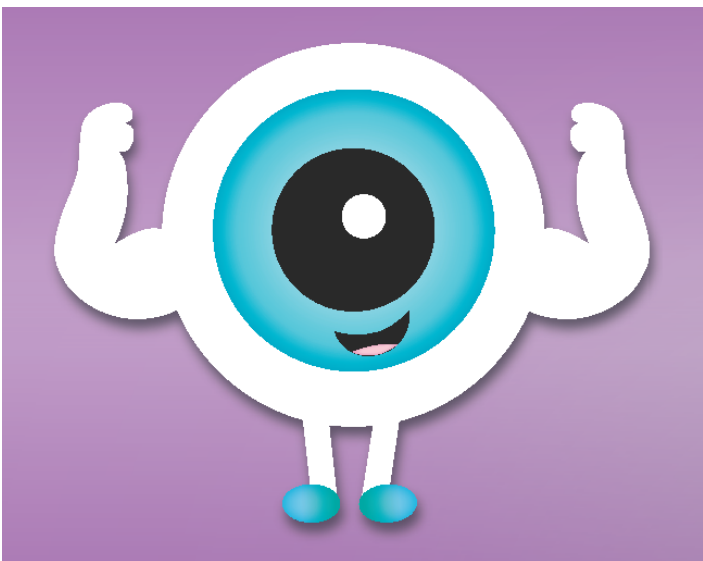
Community Pharmacy
Living Well
Campaign

The Look after your eyes campaign aimed to raise awareness of the importance of eye health and increase awareness of how to protect and look after your eyes. The campaign ran throughout April 2023 and May 2023.

“One particular patient had an irritation on his lower lid that was uncomfortable every time he opened and closed his eyes. I felt his eye health was good and the symptoms were slightly unusual for a minor eye ailment. I referred him to his optometrist. They immediately referred him to a clinic. He was told he had a form of skin cancer and now is awaiting treatment. This campaign presented this opportunity for the patient to want to discuss his eye health as realising it wasn't as it should be. It has enabled another issue to be discovered and hopefully dealt with sooner rather than later.”

“A young man visited the pharmacy with concerns about his vision. Staff referred him to the pharmacist who suspected an underlying issue and advised him to consult an ophthalmologist promptly. He followed the recommendation and received timely treatment for a serious eye condition. He returned to the pharmacy later to express his thanks, crediting pharmacy staff for potentially saving his vision. This interaction has motivated pharmacy staff to continue with their efforts in promoting eye health, knowing they had made a positive impact on someone's life.”

“There was an increase in the number of consultations with younger patients, specifically those in school and university, regarding dryness of eyes and irritation. With most of these patients sitting exams, they reported using screens a lot more than usual for revision and sometimes developing headaches as a result. Advice was given regarding taking regular breaks from screens, as well as recommending appropriate dry eye drops. Incorporating regular exercise and being active into revision breaks is not only good for their mental well-being but to reduce the risk of serious eye conditions later in life. Also with the good weather, whilst giving advice regarding protecting skin in the sun, emphasis was placed on wearing sunglasses when out and about to protect the eyes from harmful UVB rays.”



“A patient with blurred vision responded to the leaflet and after discussing the symptom onset, I signposted to Royal Victoria Hospital eye clinic which resulted in the patient undergoing shunt replacement.”

“A patient presented with regular headaches. I asked the patient when they received their last eye test, to which they responded “it was 3 years ago”. I recommended that the patient make an appointment with their optometrist as their prescription may have changed which could be the reason why they were experiencing headaches.”

“Lots of patients with dry eyes due to medication they were on. We had a diabetic patient who had not had an eye test in 3 years and was unaware of the need to do this.”

“I had a patient who was complaining of severe dry eye symptoms and aversion to light. I immediately referred to the local optician. It transpired the patient had a corneal abrasion which required further referral to secondary care in hospital.”

“Lots of parents did not know children's eye tests were free.”

“An older patient experiencing changes in vision, believed it to be dry eye. Upon inspection I could see clouding over their pupil. I referred to the local opticians to investigate. Patient was happily seen and referred on from optician for specialist care.”

“A 77 year old gardener came in with minor eye injury caused by debris hitting the eye whilst strimming. No alarm symptoms but eye was red, sore and running clear. I referred to the local optician for eye inspection to detect any corneal abrasion and appropriate treatment. Patient returned a week later to thank us for good advice which led to swift treatment for minor corneal abrasion and for helping him avoid a trip to A&E which he had originally planned to do.”

“A patient saw the leaflets being displayed in Pharmacy and it was obvious he was having difficulty reading it. When I spoke to him he told me he felt his eyesight was deteriorating and he could not get an appointment with his local GP .After a lengthy discussion I phoned a local optometrist, who gave him an appointment. He returned a few days later telling me he had been diagnosed with glaucoma and now was using eye drops.”

“We did have a small number of patients complaining of symptoms such as blurred vision, seeing double and seeing a halo around lights etc. Patients were referred and diagnosed with cataracts.”

“A patient enquired about purchasing reading glasses in the pharmacy. After consultation I recommended making an appointment with the local optician. A few weeks later the patient contacted me to say they had been diagnosed as having a cataract and they had been referred to have it removed.”

“On several occasions patients were looking for ways to help protect their eyes against any future damage. I advised them to eat healthily, especially foods high in omega 3 fatty acids, like salmon which may help delay progression of macular degeneration, stop smoking and reduced screen time can help eye health.”

“A patient had blurred vision and pain in her eyes. We referred her to her optician where they discovered a tear in her cornea. She was given an antibiotic and anti inflammatory drops.”

“Referred a patient to the optician and they came back to say they had been diagnosed with glaucoma. This may not have happened without our intervention.”

“We made customers aware of the excellent NIPEARS service. It surprises me how many patients and GPs were not aware of the service. Our local optometrist was excellent seeing customers, providing reassurance and referral where appropriate.”

“Accessing optometry services can be confusing for some people. Patients were glad of the NIPEARS service information which was greatly received. The importance of routine examinations was reinforced as patients don't always necessarily look after their eye health.”

“A patient recently registered as partially blind was able to openly speak with us about getting medication adjusted so she could safely adhere and identify which medication was which.”

“Thanks to the campaign a couple decided to quit smoking and registered with the Stop Smoking service.”

“A mother arrived with her son with a pain in his eye. They couldn't get an appointment with GP. I referred onto the patient's optometrist and subsequently they were referred to hospital. The patient is now on long term treatment for high pressure in eye. The mother was very thankful for my intervention.”

“A patient identified with possible retinal detachment. I sent to A&E. Diagnosis was correct and the patient had emergency surgery.”

Look after your eyes

Regular eye tests

Be active

Stop smoking

Eat healthily

Family history

Safety goggles

Sports goggles

Sunglasses

Tips to help keep your eyes in good shape

HSC Public Health Agency

Over 54,350 patients were engaged with through 521 pharmacies on campaign messages.

Over 64,300 leaflets were distributed.

259 pharmacies handed leaflets to individual patients they knew could benefit from it e.g. those with a family history of eye disease, those with a learning disability, certain ethnic groups, etc.

77 pharmacies signposted patients to NIPEARS and 329 pharmacies displayed the NIPEARS poster. From April 23 to June 23, there was a provisional increase in NIPEARS of 25% compared to the same quarter the previous year.*

From April 23 to June 23, there was a provisional increase in sight tests of 4.6% compared to the same quarter the previous year.*

Number of pharmacies that provided campaign information to the follow:

- 464 Elderly
- 319 Those with long term health conditions
- 228 Young families
- 196 Socially isolated
- 193 Those with hearing or visual impairment
- 177 Housebound



412 pharmacies reported the public's feedback to the campaign to be positive or very positive.

How did pharmacy engage?

- 259 Provided leaflets alongside prescriptions
- 182 Displayed the templates to capture local optometrist details
- 69 Via their delivery driver
- 61 Via social media or their website
- 48 Created visual displays in windows and instore

472 pharmacies felt campaign resources supported them to answer queries or where to signpost patients to.

244 pharmacies referred patients onto an optometrist.
57 pharmacies signposted patients to Stop Smoking services.

The main queries addressed were 'Where is the nearest optometrist?' and 'dry eye'.

The main age group provided with campaign information were those aged 61-70 years old.