

EpicCare Link User Guide

Community Optometry (April 2026)

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What is encompass and EpicCare link?

Encompass is Northern Ireland's new health and care record that will ultimately replace NIECR as the method for accessing patient health information. It was first launched in the South Eastern Trust in November 2023 and then was gradually rolled out to the remaining trusts: Belfast Trust June 2024, Northern Trust in November 2024 and finally the Western and Southern Trust in May 2025.

Primary care clinicians are able to view a read only version of the patient encompass record by the use of "EpicCare Link". As a primary care Optometrist, you will use EpicCare Link in a similar way to that of NIECR. There is a greater 'scope' of information included in EpicCare Link beyond what is visible to optometrists in NIECR.

NOTE: Optometrists are reminded that they should only access information for purposes related to the provision of clinical care and that they should not view elements of the patient record in EpicCare Link which are not directly relevant to the care they are providing.

Who has access to EpicCare Link?

If you had an active NIECR account prior to at the end of September 2023, you would have automatically received an email to your personal email account with login credentials and instructions of how login in to EpicCare. You would have also been invited to attend a webinar with information of how to use EpicCare link (recording available on the BSO website <https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/8073637352140461488>)

From: encompass EpicCare Link Helpdesk <epiccarelinkhelpdesk@hscni.net>
Sent: 10 November 2023 21:46
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: EpicCare Link Login Instructions

This email is covered by the disclaimer found at the end of the message.

Hello [REDACTED]

You have been identified as one of our Community Optometrist colleagues who will need access to EpicCare Link.

encompass is Northern Ireland's (HSC) organisation-wide transformation program for its patients and staff. encompass will go live across all HSC Trusts beginning with the SouthEastern Trust (SEHSCT) on the **9th of November 2023**. At the heart of the program is an innovative Electronic Patient Record solution powered by Epic that provides one unified patient record for each patient and service user cared for at HSCNI. As part of this solution, EpicCare Link is a web-based portal that provides read-only access to the patient record, along with some limited interactive functionality.

The EpicCare Link portal will give you access to the patient's chart (Chart Review) where you can review documentation from visits and admissions at Trusts live on encompass (initially only SEHSCT).

Please follow the instructions below to securely access EpicCare Link:

How Do I Log In?

1. Type the following into your Internet browser: <https://epiccarelink.encompass.hscni.net/>
2. Enter your username and password exactly as it appears below.

Optometrists new to the ophthalmic list can apply for an EpicCare Link and NIECR account by completing the online eForm application found on the FPS Optometry Portal.



Applications



eForms & Useful Links



All currently live Optometry eForms are hosted under their relevant sections below.

Section A: Practice and Professional eForms

1. Notification of Change to Ophthalmic Listing and Service provision eForm

Please use this eForm to notify HSC of changes to your practice including; changes in opening hours/days, new or departing Optometrist staff who require CCG eReferral accounts and any changes to the services you provide.

2. NIECR and EpicCare Link Request eForm

An optometrist should use this eForm to apply for an Optometry-view **NIECR** account.

It is important that you read the guidance notes (Governance and User notes) at the following **LINK** when applying for an **NIECR** account.

*N.B. when completing the application please ensure that you provide a personal email address for the "Work/Personal Email address" and **not** a generic email address (for example info@.....)*

If you are unable to access the eForm via the portal, a pdf version can be found here https://bso.hscni.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Optomtrist-NIECR-and-EpicCare-Link_Application-Form-v2-November-2023v2.pdf).

Why do I need to use EpicCare Link?

Now that all HSC Trust are live with encompass, you will need access EpicCare Link to view the most up-to-date clinical information and NIECR to view historic information i.e. prior to 6th June 2024 (Belfast Trust Ophthalmology) and prior to 8th May 2025 (Western Trust Ophthalmology).

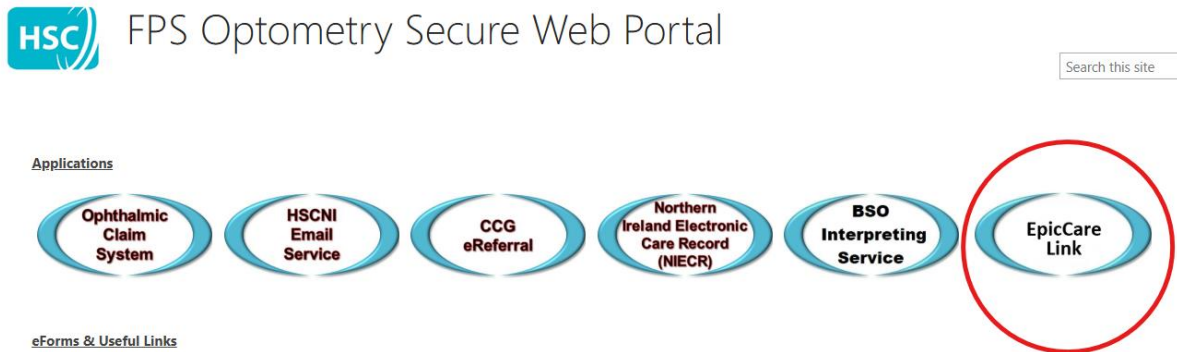
EpicCare Link provides more in-depth information compared to the primary care optometry view in NIECR. In EpicCare Link you will be able to view:

- Your referrals and attachments
- The triage outcome of your referral
- Any upcoming appointments for the patient (generally no more than 6 weeks ahead)
- Clinical notes from ophthalmology/ orthoptic/ optometry hospital visits
- Medications prescribed by HES

- OCT images and Visual Field plots (*unless blocked by your server's firewall*)
- Discharge/ GP letters

How do I access EpicCare Link when in my place of work?

EpicCare Link will be accessible from the home page of the HSC Optometry Portal (see below)



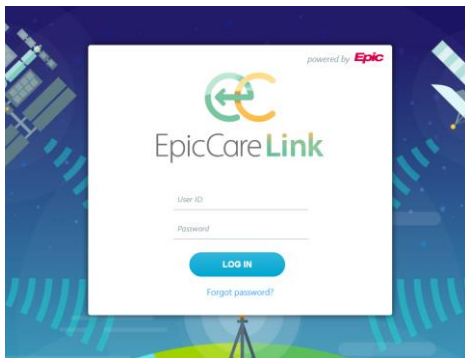
Alternatively, you can access it on your practice PC(s) using the internet browsers below.

Note that EpicCare Link can **only be accessed from one of these browsers:**

- On the Windows operating system:
 - Microsoft Edge version 88 or later
 - Google Chrome version 88 or later
 - Mozilla Firefox version 78 or later
- On the Macintosh operating system:
 - Firefox version 78 or later
 - Chrome version 88 or later
 - Safari version 14 or later
- On the Chrome operating system:
 - Chrome version 88 or later
- EpicCare Link and Tapestry Link can also be accessed by iPads running iOS 14 or later using the Safari browser and Android tablets using the Chrome browser. The native Android browser and other third-party browsers are not supported. The Chrome browser on iOS is also not supported.

Navigate to this webpage:

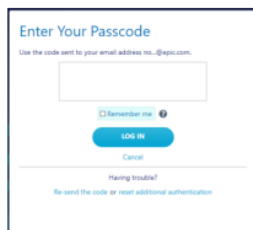
https://epiccarelink.encompass.hscni.net/EpicCareLink/common/epic_login.a.sp and enter your user ID and password.



Although EpicCare Link will be accessible from the home page of the HSC Optometry Portal you do not need to connect to the HSC optometry portal to access Epic Care Link.

How do I log on to EpicCare Link for the first time?

- When you first log in with your username and password, you're prompted to choose how you receive single-use passcodes that are required to access your account.
- This extra layer of security helps ensure that you're the only person who can log in to your account, even if someone knows your username and password.
- Please ensure that you have installed an authenticator app on your device (e.g. Google Authenticator, Microsoft Authenticator etc...), the device that you select should be one which is accessible to you when logging into EpicCare Link making it easy for you to input the Passcode which the authenticator app generates. You can receive the passcodes through a mobile application, a text message, or email.
- Each time you try to log in, you receive a passcode through your chosen method that you need to enter to finish logging in. Each passcode can be used only one time.
- After you enter the passcode, you can select the “Remember me” check box to indicate that you are using a device that is not shared with anyone else. This means that you will not be asked for a passcode the next time you sign in from the same device for a period. If you are using a shared device please do not select the “Remember me” option.



Record your reset code

- When you set up an authentication method, the system gives you a reset code to use if you need to change how you receive passcodes. For example, if you get a new smartphone you will use the reset code to set up your new phone to receive passcodes.
- Write down the reset code that appears on the screen and keep it private. You need to enter the reset code from the login screen if you need to change your authentication method. Note that you can also use this code to change your authentication method from the Settings menu after you log in.
- A new passcode is sent to you each time you log in. Enter this code to complete the login process. Unlike passcodes, the reset code appears only once after you set up your authentication method. Use this reset code only if you need to change how you receive passcodes.



Troubleshooting Access Issues

Q. Who should I contact if I am having problems accessing EpicCare Link?

You must first contact the EpicCare Link Site Administrator for primary care optometry using the ophthalmic.services@hscni.net email address. In your email please be specific about the issue/problems you are experiencing. The Site Administrator is your EpicCare Link support and will be your first point of contact for any questions/problems. Site Administrators can look up login IDs and reset passwords. If the Site Administrator is not able to assist you, they can:

- a. Contact the IT Support Team
- b. Contact the EpicCare Link Support Team

Q. I forgot my password; how do I retrieve it?

Contact ophthalmic.services@hscni.net and the optometry EpicCare Link Site Administrator(s) will be able to change your password.

Q. I'm having problems resetting my password even though I've been issued with a temporary password; what do I do?

This could be a potential Microsoft Edge browser issue. Edge stores all passwords by default, this causes a problem when setting new passwords as the browser automatically fills the 'old password' field with the **incorrect password** stored by the browser.

- **Fix**
 - Users should remove this out of date data and ensure the TEMPORARY password is put in the 'Old Password' field

Change Password

Old password: Incorrect Password – Stored by Browser

New password:

Re-enter new:

- It is recommended that passwords are not saved on a shared computer.

Q. I have an account but I haven't accessed it for more than 90days; how do I reactivate it?

Contact ophthalmic.services@hscni.net and the optometry EpicCare Link Site Administrator(s) will be able to reactivate your account.

Q. Can I change my password in EpicCare Link?

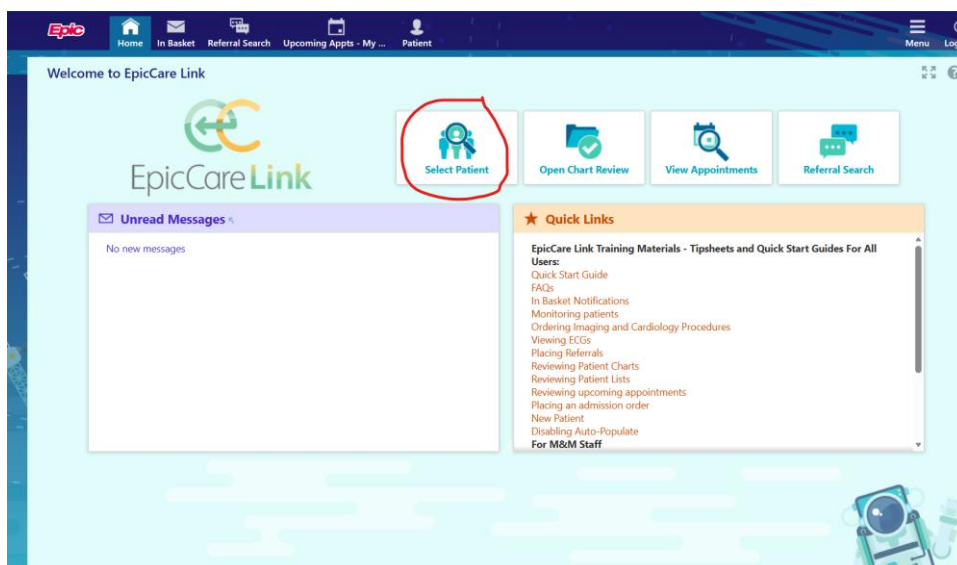
Yes, once you have an 'active' account you will be able to change your own password within EpicCare Link, using the Utilities and User Settings activities.

Navigating EpicCare Link

This guidance should be used in conjunction with the 'Getting the Most from EpicCare link Webinar' <https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/4606591334364165292>

1. Searching for a patient

- i) Click 'select patient' on the EpicCare Link homepage.




- ii) Search using patient Health Care Number (HCN) or by using Surname, Forename and Birth date if HCN not known.

MRN/Pat ID:	<input type="text"/>	HCN/NHS:	<input type="text"/>
Surname:	<input type="text"/>	Forename:	<input type="text"/>
Sex:	<input type="text"/>	Birth date:	<input type="text"/>
Postcode:	<input type="text"/>		

Use Sounds-Like

2. General navigation of patient record

- i) On the left-hand side of the screen you will see the patient's 'Storyboard'. This provides an overview of the patient's demographics, recent visits, problem list etc. More information can be viewed by holding the cursor  over the different sections of the storyboard i.e. 'hover to discover'.

For example,

a) *Patient demographics*- hover over the patient name




b) *Timeline of patient interactions* (includes clinic visits, telephone calls, triages and imaging)-

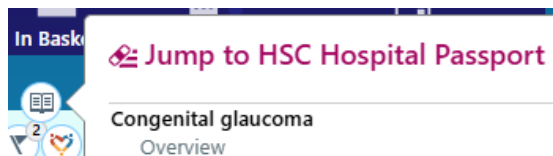
Hover over the stethoscope symbol  beneath the 'Last X visits'



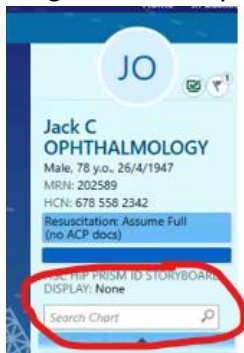
c) *Problem list* – Hovering over this list will give a brief overview of patient problems (includes non- ocular related issues)



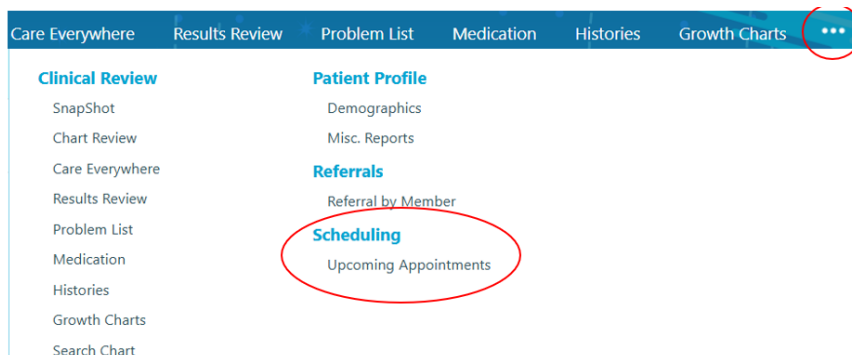
- d) **Hospital passport**- If you see this symbol  on the patient’s storyboard beside their initials/photo, then they have a hospital passport. A hospital passport is for people with a learning disability who are in contact with the hospital service. It helps clinicians give better care by making them aware of the patient’s abilities, needs and what reasonable adjustments should be made where possible. For more information about the hospital passport, click this link [Hospital Passport Electronic Form.pdf](#)



- ii) **‘Search Chart’** function – this can be used if you are looking for something specific on the patient chart e.g. Ophthalmology. All information related to your search term will be shown to the right of the storyboard.



- iii) **Future appointments** – To view any future hospital appointments for the patient, click the 3 dots on the tab bar and then select “upcoming appointments”.



Any appointments due within the next 30 days will automatically show up here. The date range can be adjusted to view further ahead. ***N.B. Outpatient appointments are generally not booked more than 6 weeks in advance.***

Upcoming Appointments

From: 27/2/2026 To: 29/3/2026 Search

Appointments for Next 30 Days
27/2/2026 - 29/3/2026

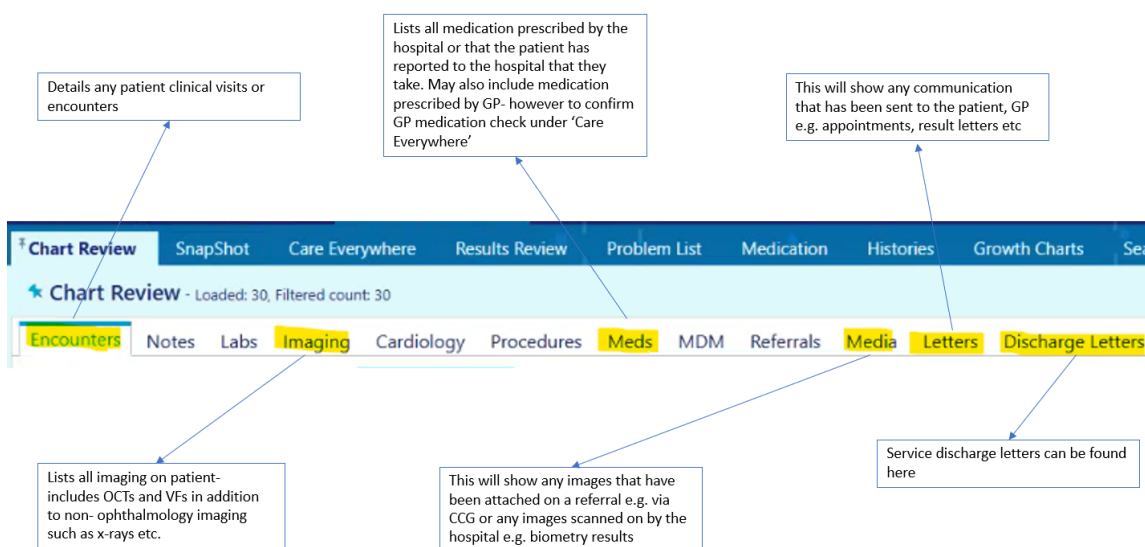
Status	Date	Visit Type	Length	Department	Provider
Bkd	[REDACTED]	NEW URGENT	15 min	BT RVH Ophthalmology Eye Casualty Arrive at: Eye Casualty, Belfast	RVH, OPHTH,EYE CASUALTY (C),JOINT CONSULTANTS

Patient Instructions:

3. Chart Review

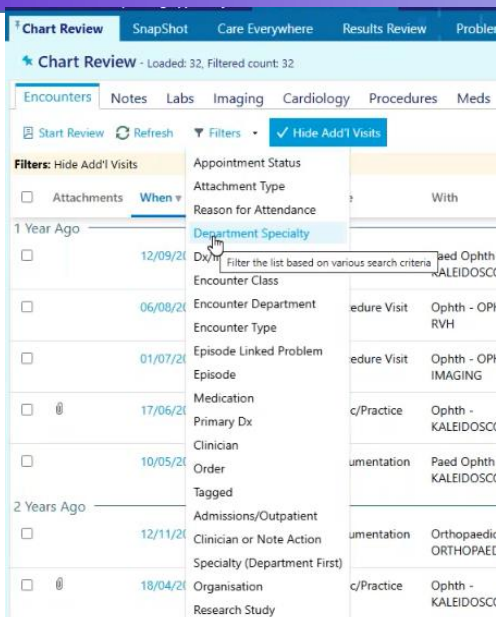
The 'Chart review' tab contains the core information of patient encounters with ophthalmology as well as other specialities. To avoid information overload or seeing information that isn't relevant or appropriate to view, use filtering functions.

i) **Sub-tabs-** The key sub-tabs on the Chart Review are highlighted and the information found within them are summarised in the diagram below.

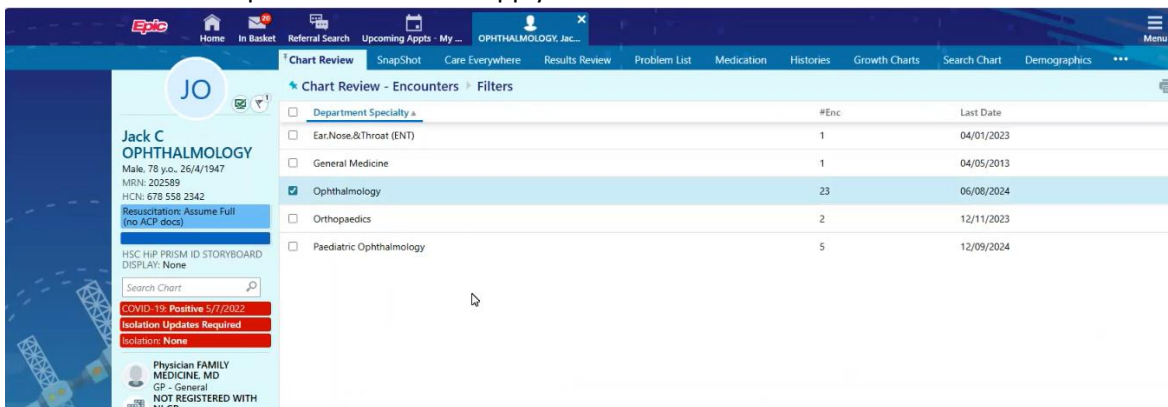



ii) Filtering

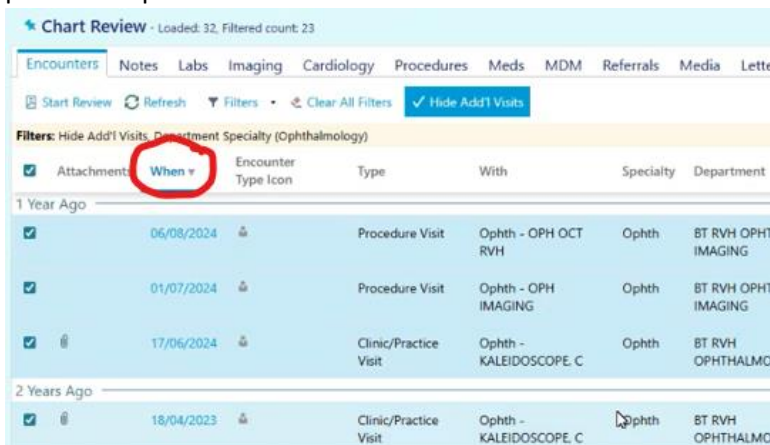
- To view encounters that are ophthalmology specific use the filter **Filters** function
- Select 'Department Speciality'



- Select the relevant specialities and click apply

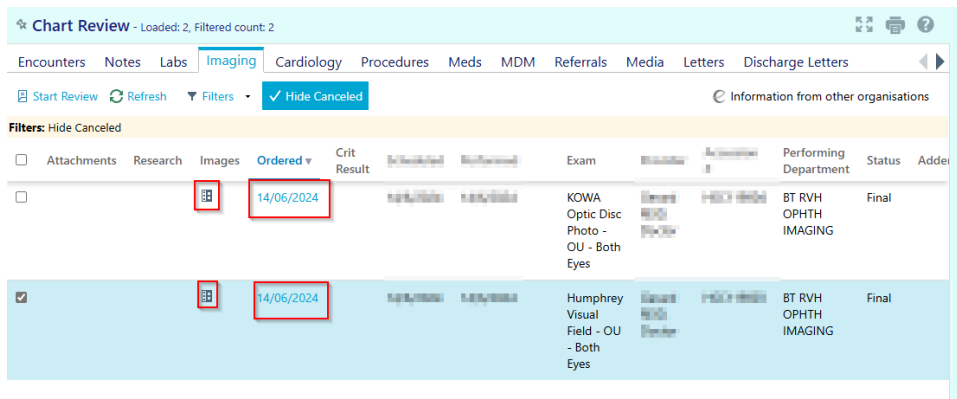


The selection can be sorted by clicking the arrow  beside the column headings. For example, if sorting by date, select the arrow beside the 'When' column and click your preferred option

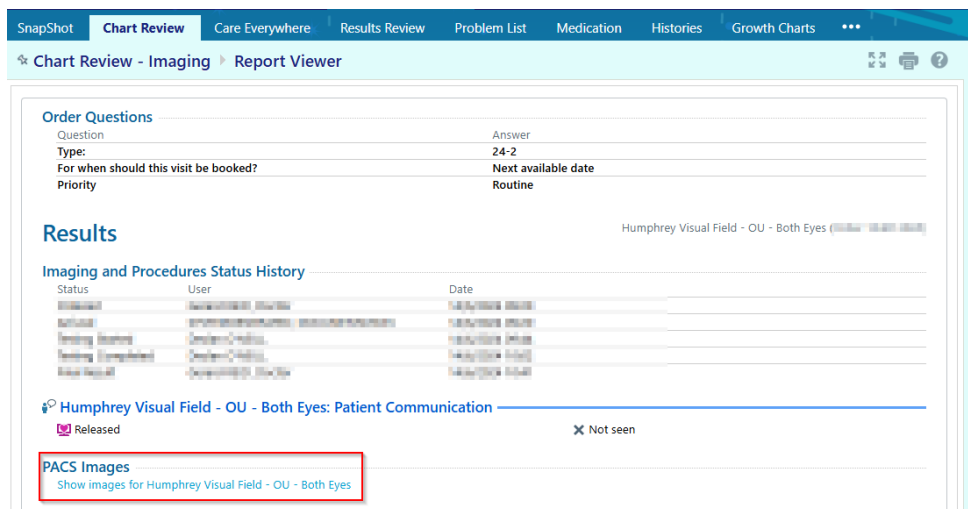


iii) Viewing Imaging i.e. OCTs etc

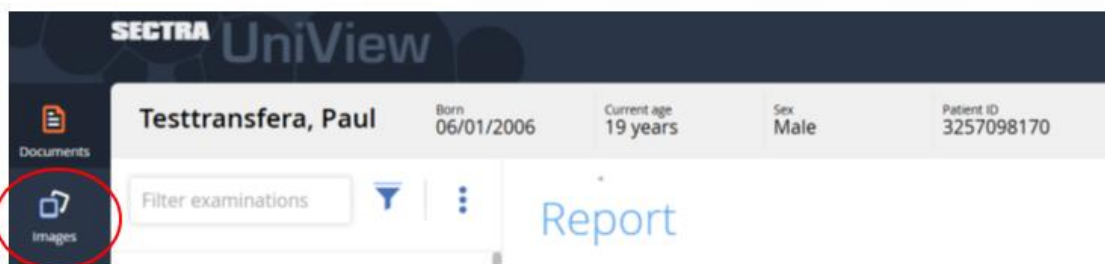
- Click the 'imaging' sub tab within the 'Chart Review' and select the image you want to view by clicking on the date the image was taken.



- "Report Viewer" will then open up. In order to view the images, look for the phrase "PACS Images" and click on the relevant hyperlink (e.g. circled in red below).

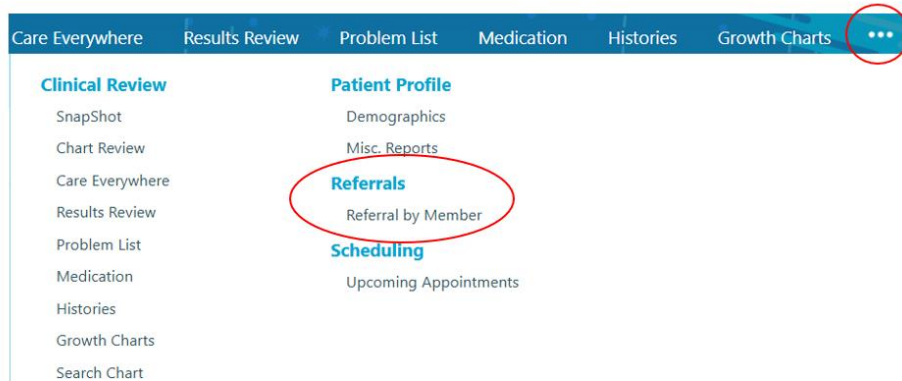


- "Sectra UniView" will then open. Select the relevant image from the list using the images icon on the left side of the menu.

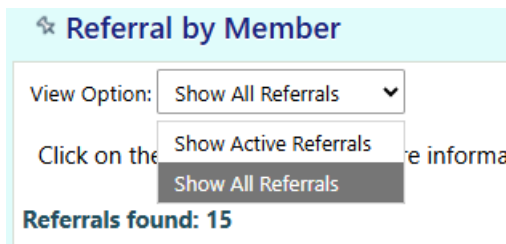


4. Referrals

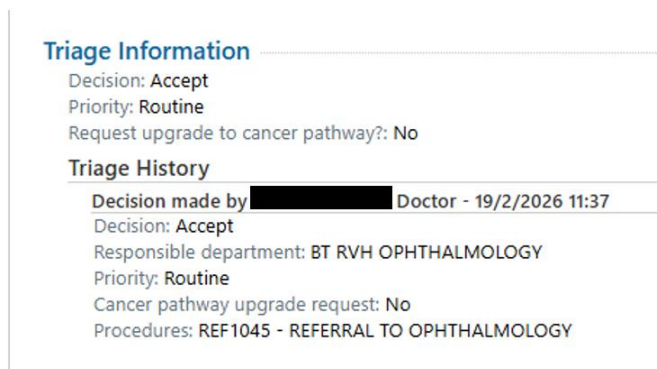
- To view patient referrals, click the 3 dots on the tab bar and select *Referrals > Referral by Member*.



- Select whether to show Active or All Referrals ('All referrals' will include referrals that are now closed).



- Select the referral that you would like to view. To find out the triage outcome i.e. decision and priority, scroll down to the "Triage Information"



NB. If you have made a referral to upgrade the priority of a referral or to provide further information, the referral will appear to have a "DENIED" status (*Figure 1*). This is because the patient is already on a waiting list and acceptance of the new referral would cause waiting list duplication.

Referrals found: 2

ID	Payer	Referred By	Referred To	Status
5689896		CCG PROVIDER	NT CAU OPHTHALMOLOGY	DENIED

Figure 1

In the Triage information you will see the reject reason as ‘Already known to Service’

Triage Information

Decision: **Reject (Already Known to Service)**
 Priority: **Routine**
 Request upgrade to cancer pathway?: No
Comments
 Orthoptist 19/3/2026 16:26 GMT
 Thank you for this information - we will arrange review appt

Triage History

Decision made by [redacted] Orthoptist - 19/3/2026 16:26
 Decision: **Reject**
 Responsible department: NT CAU OPHTHALMOLOGY
 Reject Reason: **Already Known to Service**
 Priority: **Routine**
 Cancer pathway upgrade request: No
 Procedures: REF1126 - REFERRAL TO ORTHOPTICS

Figure 2

Triage Information

Decision: **Reject (Already Known to Service)**
 Priority: **Urgent**
 Request upgrade to cancer pathway?: No

Triage History

Decision made by Jonathan KEENAN, Optometrist - 13/2/2026 16:03
 Decision: **Reject**
 Responsible department: BT RVH OPHTHALMOLOGY
 Reject Reason: **Already Known to Service**
 Priority: **Urgent**
 Cancer pathway upgrade request: No
 Procedures: REF5042 - REFERRAL TO OPHTHALMOLOGY - CATARACT

Referral Notes

Figure 3

There **may** be further information in the ‘Comments’ section as in **Figure 2**.

If there are no comments for example in **Figure 3**, go to the patient’s ‘Chart Review’ and click on ‘Encounters’. Scroll to find the ‘Referral Rejection’ and click on the date to open up this encounter.

Encounters | Notes | Labs | Imaging | Cardiology | Procedures | Meds | MDM | Referrals | Media | Letters | Discharge Letters | Episodes

Start Review Refresh Filters Clear All Filters Hide Add'l Visits Information

Filters: Hide Add'l Visits, Encounter Type (Referral Rejection)

Attachments	When	Encounter Type Icon	Type	With	Specialty	Department	RTT Outcome	Description	Tag
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23/03/2026		Referral Rejection	Ophth - KEENAN, J	Ophth	BT RVH OPHTHALMOLOGY			

Click ‘View all conversations on this encounter’

Referral Rejection 23/3/2026 Provider: Jonathan KEENAN, Optometrist (Optometry)
 OPHTHALMOLOGY (EYE CARE) DEPARTMENT

Additional Documentation

SmartForms: HSC SECONDARY REFERRAL ADVANCED
 Encounter Info: [Billing Info](#), [History](#), [Allergies](#), [Insulin Instructions](#)

Communications

[View All Conversations on this Encounter](#)
[Chart Routed to Lisap LYNCH](#)

This will then bring up any conversations where the chart has been cc’ed to another member of staff in relation to the referral rejection. N.B. this is not always present.

Referral Rejection 23/3/2026 Provider: Jonathan KEENAN, Optometrist (Optometry)
 OPHTHALMOLOGY (EYE CARE) DEPARTMENT

All Conversations (Oldest Message First)

Jonathan KEENAN, Optometrist to Lisap LYNCH

Recent referral rejected 23/3/26 13:28 JK
 Please upgrade patient to URGENT cataract clinic WAITING LIST from place on ROUTINE WAITING LIST

Arthur BRADY MCKENNA to Jonathan KEENAN, Optometrist • Lisap LYNCH

Hi, upgraded to urgent as requested 23/3/26 14:21 AB
 Thanks

5. Diabetic Eye Screening Reports

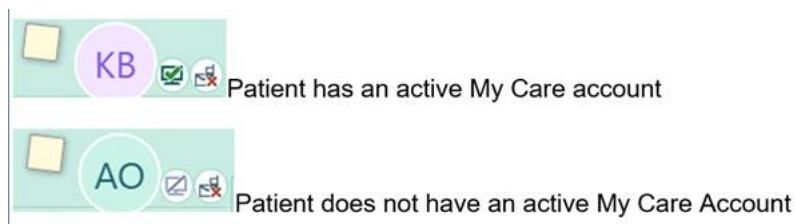
Diabetic Eye Screening reports are not currently available to view on EpicCare Link however they can still be viewed on NIECR.

6. My Care App



Optometrists are encouraged to inform patients about the My Care app during consultations. My Care enables patients to securely access their hospital digital health record, including appointments, results, clinical correspondence and in the future, waiting list information. This will help patients stay informed and engaged with their own care. A brief explanation from you can support greater uptake and improve overall patient experience.

If a patient has an active My Care account a screen with a green tick will appear on the storyboard in their EpicCare link record and if they don't the screen will be grey without a tick (see below)



For further information and resources to support patient sign-up, please see:



<https://youtu.be/pjFyuuy2dVc?si=RL2ATXUoPhaP0t3z>



Scan the QR code above for more information or click the link [My Care – DHCNI](#).

7. Appropriate use of EpicCare link

EpicCare link is for **read-only access** to support shared patient care

Community optometrists should

- access records only for patients that they are directly involved in caring for
- **not access their own personal record** or the records of their family members
- view the minimum necessary information to support clinical decision making
- use EpicCare link as a read only system- the messaging function **must not** be used to communicate with secondary care
- maintain confidentiality at all times and ensure login details are not shared

You are reminded that accessing someone’s electronic health record, when you are not involved in their care, is an offence under the Computer Misuse Act (1990) and is a breach of UK GDPR.

All access is subject to audit.

FAQs

1. I have followed the tip sheet and video guidance however I am still unable to view patients' images?

Ophthalmic Services are aware that problems may arise where corporate/business IT systems may block this new access to imaging. If you are working in a practice which experiences difficulties in opening images you should direct the problem to your own practice IT support department so that they may consider how to resolve the IT problem and enable access.

Should you have any queries in relation to this please email ophthalmic.services@hscni.net in the first instance.

2. When trying to access my patient's record a "Break-the-Glass" warning pops up, what does this mean?



When a "Break the Glass" alert appears in EpicCare Link, it indicates that the patient's chart is **restricted** due to heightened privacy protections.

Access to a restricted chart is permitted only when the information is necessary and directly related to the patient's care or treatment. You must not access a restricted record out of curiosity or for non-clinical purposes.

If access is required:

- Select or enter the appropriate reason for accessing the chart.
- Enter your EpicCare Link password to confirm.

By proceeding, you attest that access is justified for legitimate patient care purposes. All "Break the Glass" access is recorded and routinely monitored for compliance.

3. Can the settings be adjusted to increase the time until automatic log out?

No, this is a system wide setting. If you're active on the system it will time-out in 10 mins, if it's running in the background it will be 5 mins.