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VOLUME 3 ISSUE 3 FEB / MARCH 2015

Colleagues,

Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2015. The recent review of health and social care led by Sir Liam Donaldson stated:

"Four vital and often superficially treated ingredients for quality and safety improvement are: clinical leadership, cultural change, data linked to goals, and standardization. They are highly interlinked". (The Right Time, The Right Place, December 2014). The review team made ten recommendations for health and social care in Northern Ireland which the Health and Social Care Board and other key stakeholders will seek to address.

As an optometrist in primary care you are an integral part of the system-wide approach to improving care provision, being ideally placed to deliver essential information to patients about eyecare — not only in relation to their specific eyecare needs, but also on the broader, but equally important, public health messages. This issue of the Newsletter highlights some ophthalmic public health messages which I hope you will read and relay to your patients.

Please continue to share this newsletter with your colleagues and staff.

Best wishes,

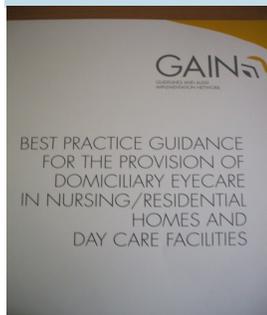
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Every effort has been made to ensure that the information included in this newsletter is correct at the time of publication. This newsletter should not be used for commercial purposes.

Domiciliary Services - Want to help?



The HSCB are undertaking a review of the GAIN Best Practice Guidance for the Provision of Domiciliary Eyecare in Nursing/ Residential Care Homes and Day Care Facilities. A workshop to progress the review will be held on Thursday 26th March 2015. If you wish to contribute to this review please contact Margaret McMullan, optometric adviser—margaret.mcmullan@hscni.net, 028 95363239



HSCB/BSO Spring CET Event — Save the date Tuesday 24th March 2015

On Tuesday 24th March 2015 the HSCB and BSO will host their annual full day CET event at Greenmount College. Plans are in place to deliver CET on the following topics ([click here](#) to view the programme):

- ◆ Ocular Tumours — eyelid and orbital
- ◆ Macular treatments — current and emerging
- ◆ Retinal Detachment — flashes and floaters
- ◆ Case Studies — presentation and discussion

The lectures and case study presentations will be delivered by local ophthalmic professionals and in addition it is hoped to provide information on smoking cessation and how optometry can contribute to this important public health message and campaign. Information on the CET event will be issued by BSO in late February 2015. To book a place at the CET event please contact Karen Lee, Ophthalmic Professional Services Support (karen.lee@hscni.net, 028 95363745) **before 9th March 2015**. The next CET event is provisionally booked for Tuesday 20th October 2015.

Independent Prescribing Optometrists

If you are a qualified IP Optometrist and wish to register as a Non-Medical Prescriber for issue of NHS prescriptions (HS21) in Northern Ireland, please contact any one of the optometric advisers who will advise you of the process and the requirements for registration.

LES IOP Referral Refinement—training

The Health and Social Care Board may offer further LES training and assessments later this year, if you are interested in undertaking the training please contact Karen Lee (karen.lee@hscni.net or 028 95363745).

General Optical Council — Review of Standards Project

The GOC will launch the consultation on the new Standards for Ethics and Performance in March 2015. You are encouraged to read and respond to this upcoming consultation as it will have a direct impact on your professional practice. You can read the [responses](#) to the recent Call for Evidence on the GOC website.

Optometry and Public Health..... some brief points & considerations

As a primary care health professional you are in the perfect position to advise your patients about lifestyle choices and nutrition which can help reduce the risk of eye disease and visual impairment. Many eye diseases have preventable components—AMD, ocular surface disease and diabetic eye disease and in your day to day engagement with patients you are well placed to “**make every contact count**” and educate your patients on the importance of good diet, physical exercise, UV protection and smoking cessation.

SMOKING AND EYE HEALTH —In recent months there has been a significant amount of press in relation to the link between smoking, eye health and visual impairment. Academic literature has cited smoking as causing an increased risk of AMD by up to 78% and an increased risk of age-related cataracts. Within Northern Ireland the Public Health Agency “Want 2 Stop” campaign offers advice and support to patients who wish to stop smoking. PHA have also a dedicated information section on e-cigarettes and the concerns in relation to the use of these products. Please visit the “want to stop” website for further information (<http://want2stop.info/> or [click here](#)).



REMEMBER: WEDNESDAY 11th MARCH is 'NO SMOKING DAY'. Please do your best to encourage your patients to stop smoking.



NUTRITION, EYE HEALTH AND SUPPLEMENTS — The importance of a healthy, balanced diet in preventing and reducing the risk of systemic disease is well known and evidenced. Like systemic diseases, people can afford some level of protection against eye disease if they follow a healthy diet in particular in regard to their intake of vitamins and minerals. A recently published study (part of the Blue Mountains Eye Study, Australia) concluded that compliance with dietary guidelines was associated with a decreased long term risk of visual impairment in Australians aged 65 yrs+ (Am J Ophthalmol, 2014 Aug; 158(2):302-8). Specific HSCB guidance (2013) in relation to AMD and Supplements is available on page 4 of the following link; <http://niformulary.hscni.net/PrescribingNewsletters/MedicinesManagement/Vol4/MMNewsVol4.3/Pages/default.aspx>, or [click here](#). This guidance reiterates earlier advice that supplements for AMD should not be prescribed on the NHS.

More Public Health Issues.....

LASER POINTERS — In addition to the more 'obvious' public health issues in relation to lifestyle and nutrition, it is also important to remember that advice on prevention of ocular injuries is highlighted. As an optometrist you are encouraged to provide this to your patients. Some patients will be at increased 'risk' from ocular injuries, for example due to their occupation but you should be aware of other instances when injuries can occur, for example, DIY, Fireworks and with Laser Pointers.

In Mid-December 2014 the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland issued a warning in relation to the use of Laser Pointers. In recent months Ms Eibhlin McLoone, Consultant Paediatric Ophthalmologist (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust) has examined a number of children who have received retinal burns as a result of the use of Laser Pointers. Typically these Laser Pointers had been purchased abroad (e.g. on a family holiday). You can view the PHA press release on <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/laser-pointer-eye-injury-warning> or [click here](#) . You are encouraged to advise your patients of this risk.



DIABETES — Optometrists have a tremendous opportunity to assist in delivering valuable public health information in relation to many systemic conditions which have an impact on eye health. Diabetes has frequently been cited as one of the biggest Public Health challenges and as an optometrist you are well equipped to advise your patients on the ocular aspects of diabetes. However, as a qualified health care professional, you should seize the opportunity to ensure "every contact counts" and provide where possible advice on other aspects of diabetes and the importance of ongoing attention to the many other potential complications which can arise in a **person with diabetes (PWD)**. If a PWD is educated in the holistic approach to good diabetic care the risk of long term complications can be reduced. To assist and support a PWD in the holistic approach to their health care a check-list is available from Diabetes UK, please refer to it as a starting point for any approach you may wish to employ in delivering this essential public health message to a PWD. The checklist is available on: <http://www.diabetes.org.uk/Documents/15-healthcare-essentials/15-healthcare-essentials-checklist-0714.pdf>, [click here](#). There are many health care teams delivering excellent care who can assist a PWD and a wealth of information and support is available from voluntary sector organisation and within social media. **Please try to "Make Every Contact Count".**



General Ophthalmic Services – Updates

In early April 2015 all practices will receive the annual **Quality Assurance** returns documentation. All Optometry practices will be asked to return declarations in relation to:

Annual Practice Quality Assurance Returns 2014/15

- ◆ Complaints
- ◆ Adverse Incidents
- ◆ Receipt and Dissemination of all MOS and Ophthalmic Guidance
- ◆ Business Continuity Planning (BCP)

Quality Assurance across all primary care professions is a vital part of good governance in service provision. To assist practices in the fulfillment of business continuity planning the Health and Social Care Board have produced guidance/information and a template which practices may find useful in addressing the issue of business continuity planning. The Health and Social Care Board thank practices for their ongoing engagement and participation in this essential governance work.

GOS S/T Fees, CET and Pre-Reg Grant Uplift

In January 2015 the BSO issued MOS/293 and MOS/294 which outlined the increase in GOS S/T fees, Pre-registration and CET grants. The MOSs were issued to all GOS providers and are hosted on the BSO website <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2377.htm>, [click here](#). PLEASE NOTE: CET grant claims must be submitted by 30th April 2015.

Ophthalmic Listing **Important**

All GOS Providers will receive guidance in relation to Ophthalmic Listing in the incoming days. Please ensure that you read this guidance in full taking on board the advice in relation to the statutory requirements for ophthalmic listing for GOS.

Ophthalmic Claims System (OCS)

Electronic Claims

Practices who have received the recently delivered round of OCS training are encouraged to contact BSO to arrange for full implementation of OCS for electronic submission of GOS claims. Due to the success of the first year of OCS and the roll out of electronic claiming to over 120 optometry practices, contractors are advised that the look up facility for the Health and Care Number (HCN) will be integrated into the full functionality of OCS and will in the incoming months not be available as a 'stand alone' function. Please contact Angela Dowds to progress the full implementation of OCS within your practice (angela.dowds@hscni.net or 028 9536 3752).

Ophthalmic Resources – Recent Uploads

Please continue to check the BSO website for all relevant Ophthalmic Services information <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1780.htm>, [click here](#). The following information and publications have been added to the BSO website in recent weeks.

Report of the 2014 Sight Test and Ophthalmic Public Health Survey

The [Report](#) of the 2014 Sight Test and Ophthalmic Public Health Survey was published by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in early December. It outlines the findings of the Survey of primary care optometry activity which took place in June 2014. The 2014 Survey was different in both format and content from the last Survey (2007). Thanks are extended to those optometry practices that participated in the Survey and even if you did not participate in the Survey you are encouraged to read the report. Please access the report at <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2376.htm>, [click here](#).

Developing Eyecare Partnerships Annual Report 2013-14

The second annual DEP Report has been published. It outlines the work undertaken in 2013-14 (Year 2 of DEP). Please take some time to read this Report. DEP will continue to be a major focus for the HSCB and all those engaged in the process of eyecare reform in Northern Ireland—please view the [DEP Report](#) via the Developing Eyecare Partnerships page on the BSO website on <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2612.htm>, [click here](#).

Complaints Process—update on consent

In early December updated guidance and documentation in relation to 'consent' issues for complaints was uploaded to the OCS 'splash page'. For those few practices who are not connected to the BSO web portal this information was posted to your practice. Please ensure that you and your staff are familiar with this updated guidance <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2607.htm>, [click here](#). Complaints are a statutory obligation for you as a GOS provider and you must ensure that you have a working knowledge of the complaints process.

Accessible Services—People with Sensory Loss

In October 2014 the HSCB in association with Action on Hearing Loss NI and RNIB NI launched 'Best Practice Guidance - Creating Accessible Primary Care Services for People with Sensory Loss'. Please view the guidance at www.hscboard.hscni.net/publications/2014, [click here](#).

Optometry Local Enhanced Service – Updates

During 2014 Optometry in Northern Ireland has witnessed the introduction of two Local Enhanced Services (LES). In December 2013 the first LES was introduced to assist in demand management as part of the redesign of glaucoma services in Northern Ireland. The LES enabled accredited optometrists to provide a service to repeat the measurement of an eligible patient's IOP using applanation tonometry. In September 2014 the Southern Local Commissioning Group rolled out a pilot service (SPEARS) for the optometric assessment, triage and/or management of acute (non-sight threatening) eye conditions in the Armagh/Dungannon locality. Sixteen Optometry practices are currently engaged in this pilot service. As with the IOP Referral Refinement (Repeat Measures) LES, audit of the SPEARS pilot is ongoing and it is hoped that by late Spring 2015 evaluation of the pilot will take place.

IOP R/R Repeat Measures LES

AFTER ONE YEAR

AND NEXT YEAR

350 Optometrists are currently accredited to provide the IOP Referral Refinement (Repeat Measures) LES. 238 practices have at least one optometrist accredited to provide the LES (90% of all optometry practices). In total 1761 patient episodes of IOP Referral Refinement (Repeat Measures) LES provision were claimed. 24% of all optometry practices have not submitted a claim for LES provision and reasons reported why no claim had been made include: no eligible patients, paperwork was time consuming and applanation tonometry is routinely used.

Of the 1761 patients, 64.4% of patients who previously would have been referred in on the grounds of IOP values >21mmHg were not referred thus reducing the demand in ophthalmology and ensuring patients were not exposed to unnecessary worry and anxiety.

During the course of 2015/16 the Health and Social Care Board will continue to audit LES provision. Further review of LES provision will take place in conjunction with the two Ophthalmology Health and Social Care Trust providers (Belfast and Western). The Health and Social Care Board will progress work to incorporate the claims for IOP Referral Refinement (Repeat Measures) LES into the Ophthalmic Claims System (OCS). The ability of OCS to accept LES claims would ensure that the process is as simplified as possible for optometry practices who use OCS. In the first year of the Local Enhanced Service 440 claims were rejected on initial submission. Please ensure that you complete the proper claim form (with patient signature) and summary sheet. All LES forms are hosted on the BSO website <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2480.htm> or, [click here](#).

Ensure that if your patient cannot attend for their repeat IOP measurements within the 28 day time frame that you seek approval for an extension from one of the HSCB advisers. If you have a LES accredited optometrist working in your practice please encourage them to provide the service when eligible patients present.

Ophthalmic Referrals

OPHTHALMIC REFERRAL FORMS

You are reminded that all ophthalmic referral forms are hosted on the BSO website in fully writeable PDF format. You are encouraged to utilise this format as it optimises legibility. Illegible referrals compromise patient safety. Please refer to <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2485.htm> or [click here](#) to access all referral forms and referral guidance.

IT Progress – Optometry and eReferral Update

The benefits of secure electronic storage and transfer of patient demographic and clinical information are well established and many developments are taking place in Northern Ireland within the sphere of eHealth, a significant part of which is the roll out of the Northern Ireland Electronic Care Record (NIECR). The integration of all relevant clinical information into a single source in the NIECR, accessible by health care clinicians across many health care disciplines, is already reaping tremendous rewards assisting those in the front line of care provision. From an eyecare perspective, NIECR provides the opportunity for a patient's ophthalmic history to be recorded and stored, thereby ensuring that important information on eye medications and regimes, diabetic retinopathy screening, attendance at ophthalmology clinics etc...is located in a single information source. The HSCB are currently working on the implementation and roll out of NIECR in additional health specialties and ophthalmology is included in this workplan.



It is recognised that electronic referral is an important first step in integrated communication between primary and secondary care. The Health and Social Care Board are currently progressing work to develop the processes and protocols to develop a process which will facilitate eReferrals for primary care optometry practices. Optometry Northern Ireland (as your representative body) and other key stakeholders are involved in this work.

HSC Change Day

HSC Change Day is a social movement across NI encouraging HSC staff, health care professionals, volunteers and patients to make an online pledge to improve service quality, safety or the patient experience. You and your staff can make a pledge by visiting hscchangeday@gmail.com or, via [Twitter @hscchangeday](#) using the hash tag [#hscchangeday](#) before the 11th March 2015.

NICE Clinical Knowledge Summary—Retinal Detachment

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have recently updated the [Clinical Knowledge Summary](#) for Retinal Detachment. The update followed a literature search in November 2014 to identify evidence-based guidelines, UK policy, systematic reviews, and key RCTs published since the publication of the previous Clinical Knowledge Summary (2009). The recommendations have been amended, in line with expert opinion from the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and The College of Optometrists. Please refer to the following link to read the Retinal Detachment Clinical Knowledge Summary: <http://cks.nice.org.uk/retinal-detachment#!topicsummary> or [click here](#).