

HSCB Optometric Practice Newsletter

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Colleagues,

Thanks to those practitioners who gave informal feedback on the first issue of the Optometry Newsletter. The feedback was positive and useful. As always, the Optometry staff in HSCB welcome any ideas for content from practices and individual practitioners and optical staff which may be of interest to the wider profession within Northern Ireland. I would encourage you to make use of the BSO website which has a section dedicated to ophthalmic services (see - <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1780.htm>). This will provide information, guidance, MOSs, referral forms and other GOS documentation. If you have any ideas for other GOS related items that you would like included on the BSO website please contact any of the advisers.

Included in Issue 2 is information on: a pilot project for electronic submission of GOS claims; procedures for ophthalmic professionals seeking admission to the ophthalmic list; a CET update on the newly introduced element of "peer discussion" within the new CET cycle and probity and governance updates.

I hope you will enjoy reading Issue 2 of the Optometry Newsletter and if you wish to suggest ideas for future issues please contact any one of the HSCB Optometry team using the e-mail addresses at the bottom of the newsletter.

Best wishes



Raymond Curran, Head of Optometry, Integrated Care HSCB

Special points of interest:

- Electronic Claim Submission Project
- CET update
- Governance update
- Probity update
- Electronic Referral Pilot
- Latest News
- Congratulations!

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Health and Social Care Board
12/22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS

www.hscboard.hscni.net

E-mail: margaret.mcmullan@hscni.net,
janice.mccrudden@hscni.net or fiona.north@hscni.net



Feedback on Electronic Referral Pilot Project

The Southern Trust electronic referral pilot finished and HSCB would like to take this opportunity to thank all the practitioners and optometric practices that participated in the pilot project. Feedback from practitioners was on the whole very positive, with contractors giving encouraging feedback on the positive and prompt feedback from Dr Knox, the ophthalmologist involved in the pilot. Practitioners generally agreed that they would like to have had a broader range of criteria within the referral protocol. The initial audit showed that in total 19 referrals were received in line with the established protocols of which 18 images were of a good quality and 1 of adequate quality. 6 of the 19 referrals did not require a follow up outpatient appointment. Dr Knox felt that on balance, the pilot did show that telemedicine was an effective means for referrals and that if the project was to be rolled out that a tailor made IT system would be required to achieve maximum efficiency and optimum outcomes for both patients and clinicians. Thanks are also extended to Dr Knox and the staff of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust for all their efforts and contribution to the pilot project.

Governance Update

OPHTHALMIC LIST APPLICATIONS

From December 2012 there have been some changes in the process for application to the Ophthalmic List for Northern Ireland. Included in these changes are; the need for a health clearance declaration in relation to Tuberculosis and information requests from other health care bodies e.g. PCTs / NHSCB. It is hoped that these changes will not have a detrimental effect on the time taken for practitioners to be admitted to the ophthalmic list but practitioners need to be aware of the changes.



QUALITY ASSURANCE—ANNUAL PRACTICE RETURNS

In the incoming few weeks you will receive the annual optometric practice QA documentation for completion in early April 2013. The practice returns on complaints and adverse incidents are obtained and collated in line with other primary care professional groupings. Practices will be asked this year questions in relation to MOS / alerts and if the information in these is complied with and relayed to all practice staff.



RESOLVING PROBLEMS—IT IS IN YOUR BEST INTEREST

The number of referrals of NI optometrists to the General Optical Council has increased significantly in recent months. These referrals are usually made by members of the public—your patients, in many instances. The HSCB would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the importance of dealing with complaints from your patients in a proper and timely manner. Complaints in optometric practice will arise from many sources ranging from clinical management decisions the optometrist may make, to dis-satisfaction with the appearance of spectacles provided. It is imperative that not only should your clinical recording keeping be of a good standard to sustain defence of your actions but also the recording of notes and actions taken in all instances where a patient returns to your practice voicing concern or making a formal complaint. Please ensure that you have a robust complaints process in place in your practice as this will assist in reassuring patients that you have a keen interest in resolving any complaints or difficulties they may present with. It is also worth considering the idea of having a poster in your premise on complaints and how you will attempt to resolve them. In line with other primary care contractors you are required to have a complaints process and report complaints. **Should you require any further information or advice on complaints please contact one of the optometry advisers of the HSCB.**

Developing Eyecare Partnerships

In October 2012 the Minister for Health Social Services and Public Safety Mr Edwin Poots launched "Developing Eyecare Partnerships". The HSCB warmly welcomes the launch of this strategy which will pave the way for the development of integrated care pathways involving all sectors charged with delivery of eyecare services, including the voluntary sector. It is acknowledged that many changes need to be made to realise the goal to include; maximization of existing resources, investment in training and technology and development of communication mechanisms.



Pictured : Health Minister, Mr Edwin Poots and Mr David Galloway

The HSCB has been charged with setting up a project board to oversee the many work-streams which will evolve from the strategy. The aspiration that the strategy will provide a pathway for enhanced primary eyecare services outside the framework of General Ophthalmic Services will come to fruition over the months and years ahead. It is the hope of the HSCB that local practitioners will be willing to embrace the challenges ahead.

Glaucoma Services

Since the publication of NICE clinical guideline CG85 in 2009, HSCB has worked on a care pathway to ensure that the recommendations contained within are implemented. Briefly, these are to ensure timely diagnosis, ensure consistent standards, ensure that properly trained professionals deliver care and to provide the best possible outcomes for those with glaucoma, suspect glaucoma or ocular hypertension.

This is where you come in!

The service model includes two essential components relevant to optometry; referral refinement to reduce false positive referrals into secondary care, and involvement of Community Optometrists with a Special Interest (COSI's) in secondary care clinics. For Referral Refinement (RR), high street optometrists will be trained and accredited in the use of applanation tonometry to repeat IOP measurements in those patients who read high on NCT, and in the absence of suspicious fields or optic nerves. Some 200+ practices have expressed an interest in providing this service, which will attract grant aid towards equipment, and a fee for the RR. Thank you for this. Details on training and accreditation will follow shortly, but it need not be too daunting. In addition, a number of COSI's will be recruited to work in parallel clinics, alongside consultant glaucoma colleagues, within Belfast and Western HSCTs. Supervised training will be provided, with phased clinic numbers to facilitate this. Recruitment is imminent, and although the College of Optometrists Professional Certificate in Glaucoma may not be essential, it may be desirable.

HSCB and other involved parties, thank you for your expressions of interest, and look forward to wide regional uptake across both modalities.

GOS Updates and Guidance

The HSCB would like to draw your attention to all the MOS and optometric guidance which has been issued in recent months. We would like to remind all practitioners that it is essential that all staff working in practices read and apply the guidance to their working practice. In particular a reminder on MOS 275:

- **MOS 275—Sight Tests—minimum intervals and protocols for approval for early re-tests (issued October 2012)** . This MOS reminds practitioners and practices of the recommended *minimum intervals* for GOS sight tests.

Practitioners are advised that these are minimum intervals and that intervals beyond those stated can be employed in clinical practice. Practitioners are asked to look at the College Guidance on routine eye examinations (Section B2). In particular attention should be paid to the guidance in section B2.10 to 2.17.

Practices who have not sought approval for an early re-test in line with MOS 275 and who subsequently submit a GOS S/T claim for payment will NOT be given retrospective approval and the sight test claim will not be paid by BSO. These decisions will not be reversed.

Congratulations—community optometry and research



Congratulations to Mr Frank Petticrew on his recent award. Mr Petticrew was awarded the Herschel Medal which recognises excellence in the field of contact lens design and fitting. Frank is a highly esteemed member of our profession and I am sure you would join with the HSCB in sending our best wishes to Frank on attaining such an award. Andrew, Frank's son, said "One of things I am most proud of is that he is incredibly modest about all he has achieved. If you ask him, he simply says that he was really lucky to have had the opportunity to do such interesting and rewarding work."



Congratulations are also offered to Dr Lisa O'Donoghue on receipt of the Neil Charman Medal for Research from the College of Optometrists. This prestigious medal acknowledges Lisa's tremendous contribution to research on the epidemiology of refractive error. Lisa pictured with Neil Charman says " This reward recognises the importance of the on-going NICER (Northern Ireland Errors of Refraction Study) and reflects the dedication and commitment of the study team, especially my colleagues at the University of Ulster. A big thank you must also go to the schools, teachers and pupils who embraced this project so enthusiastically and to the College of Optometrists who provided the funding".

Dr Karen Dempsey (pictured opposite) lecturer in Optometry at University of Ulster, Coleraine was recently awarded her PhD. Karen's research was a Prospective Study of Refractive Error amongst Northern Ireland Schoolchildren. Karen's research is integral to the work of the NICER which has 3 recognized phases and began in 2006. Congratulations also to Margaret McMullan, optometric adviser at the HSCB recently completed a part time research MPhil at Queens University. Her research looked at the ophthalmic and visual profiles of elderly people in care homes in Northern Ireland. Well done Karen and Margaret!



European Accolade



The HSCB Optometry team would like to congratulate Dr Julie-Anne Little on her appointment as President of the European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECCO). Dr Little took up position in November 2012 and we are honored to have a local optometrist and esteemed academic hold such a valued position within Europe. Julie-Anne (pictured) said "I have been involved in the European council of optometry and optics (ECCO) for a number of years now. It is very interesting to see our professions from a wider perspective. While optometrists are striving to progress and have the NHS utilise our expertise at a regional level, many countries in Europe see UK and Irish optometry as 'gold standard', with other European countries having limitations on their scope of practice, education and the use of diagnostic drugs. That said, some European countries, notably Norway and the Netherlands, have made great strides to establish the optometric profession in recent years, and other countries have quite different economic models for optometry and optics. As such, it is important that UK and Ireland are part of the platform for discussion and development of optometry and optics in Europe. So, I am delighted to have become President of ECCO and to represent Northern Ireland."

Probity Update

- Ophthalmic post payment visits (PPV) are ongoing across Northern Ireland. The HSCB acknowledges the professional manner in which practice staff welcome visiting officers of the HSCB and BSO
- The HSCB is accountable for how the Ophthalmic Budget is used in the provision of GOS. The budget is currently almost £1 million overspent due, mainly, to the huge increase in the number of people eligible for GOS. We all, the HSCB, practitioners and patients, have a responsibility to ensure that GOS is used appropriately. A recent review of GOS claims submitted for early retests showed that 35% of early sight test claims are submitted without a reason for the early retest noted on the claim form, as is required in MOS 275. A formal check on retest intervals is now being introduced as part of the PPV visit sight test claim check. Practitioners are encouraged, if providing an early retest, to ensure that their patient clinical records clearly indicate the reason for the early test otherwise it may be deemed ineligible.

Electronic Submission of GOS Claims—BSO Project

The Business Services Organisation (BSO) are currently developing a project for electronic submission of GOS claims and will shortly be piloting it with several optometric practices throughout Northern Ireland. The Ophthalmic Committee, at their meeting in November 2012, received a presentation from BSO Ophthalmic Payments staff on the proposals. A recent survey of all optometric practices in Northern Ireland showed that 72% of practices had internet access and 68% of practices were interested in electronic submission of GOS claims. It is hoped that following the pilot and assessment of the feedback and outcomes that the project will be rolled out to all practices who wish to avail of electronic claim submission. The BSO and HSCB fully appreciate that training and information sessions will be required so that the project will be successfully implemented within practices. Electronic submission will allow the last date for claim submission, which currently must be done by 10th day of the month, to be extended and importantly the electronic process should provide information **PRIOR** to an eye examination on patient eligibility checks e.g. date of last GOS test. This will assist practices in delivery of eyecare services to those who are eligible and will ensure that claims are accepted for payment at that point in time therefore significantly reducing the number of claim queries and returned claims. Overall this should improve the efficiency of the payment process both for practices and for BSO.

Relocation of Belfast Trust Optometry Services

You should have received communications in October 2012 from the HSCB in relation to the relocation of Adult Low Vision, Adult Contact Lens and Artificial Eye Clinics from the Royal Victoria Hospital to the Shankill Health and Wellbeing Centre.



Miss Jennifer Lindsay, principal optometrist for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust welcomed the move to the new premises saying "Staff within the adult low vision, contact lens and artificial eye clinics are now well settled into their new home in the Shankill Wellbeing and Treatment Centre, following their relocation in October 2012. Patients are also benefitting from the move and reporting that they appreciate the easy access and car parking and modern clinical facilities. Glaucoma services also plan to relocate over the next few months, meaning more eye care services will be provided from the Shankill site. Any referrals or

queries for optometry services within the Belfast Trust should be directed to—

Optometry Services, Shankill Wellbeing and Treatment Centre, 83 Shankill Road, Belfast, BT13 1FD, Tel: 028 9504 0798"

CET Update

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY - Tues 9th April 2013

The HSCB will be hosting a CET day at Greenmount College, Antrim on 9th April 2013.

2013 has seen the introduction of the new GOC CET scheme where the outcomes are to be associated with 'reflective learning' in line with the core competencies as stated by the General Optical Council. From 1st January 2013 peer review / discussion will become a compulsory element for continued GOC registration. This essentially means that registrants must complete one peer review session within the next 3 year CET cycle in order to be retained on the GOC register. Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians locally will need to carefully consider how they go about achieving this requirement. The new CET scheme will also be discussed at the planned CET event on 9th April meeting and representatives of the GOC will be in attendance to explain the new process. The Northern Ireland Optometric Society (NIOS) are planning the provision of peer discussion events in the incoming months with the first event being held on 13th February. Please keep an eye on the NIOS website for further details (www.nios.org.uk)

The draft April CET program includes lectures on Glaucoma Management and Paediatric Eyecare. An interesting line up of speakers is planned and CET points will be available for attendees. Booking forms will be sent out from the BSO in February 2013. **KEEP THE DATE FREE!**



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