

Primary Care Optometry: Acute Eyecare Pathway Important Update on Eye Casualty Referrals

This guidance contains **important information for all optometric practices** across NI Ireland on the introduction of a new Regional Eye Casualty (EC) referral form.

Please ensure this update is shared with, and read carefully by, all your practice clinical staff including locums.

Optometry: Regional Eye Casualty (EC) Referral and Feedback Form

A new regional referral form has been developed by the HSCB with input from the Eye Casualty teams in **both the Belfast and Western Trusts**.

The new regional referral form has been designed to further improve communication and information sharing at the interface between primary care optometry and secondary care Eye Casualty services. It includes information specifically relevant to an urgent eye casualty referral. It is double-sided and the back page is a **feedback form** which, when time permits, the Eye Casualty clinician will complete and send back to the referring optometrist. This feedback will support valuable learning and improve communications between our services and, ultimately, improved patient care.

A copy of the regional referral form is attached and it may also be accessed at the following link: <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2485.htm>

Currently it is in M/S Word format and must be printed and completed by hand. A writeable PDF format will be provided shortly which may be typed onto directly and printed and given to the patient.

If you require it in an alternative format for you practice management please contact ophthalmic.services@hscni.net.

Important features of the Regional Eye Casualty (EC) Referral form:

A: Front page - Eye Casualty Referral Form

- **Indication of type of eye examination/assessment** that resulted in the referral i.e. NIPEARS/ GOS eye examination/ Other examination.
This information will be used to monitor the number of referrals resulting from an NIPEARS assessment, the type of urgent referrals resulting from a routine GOS or private sight test etc.

➤ **Presenting Symptoms (including duration)**

An indication of the duration of the presenting symptoms is important to include as it assists the EC clinician with the differential diagnosis.

➤ **Investigations/Findings, including 'BERT score' where required**

The 'BERT score' is a new scoring system developed by Belfast Trust ophthalmology for use with patients presenting with symptoms of PVD. The BERT score assists in differentiating between a simple PVD, which is unlikely to require referral, and a complicated PVD i.e. a PVD with a potential associated retinal tear or, detachment, that requires urgent referral. The aim of the 'BERT score' is to assist in clinical decision making and in reducing unnecessary referrals for the patient.

Further information on the 'BERT' scoring guidance will be issued in the next few weeks. You **do not** need to record anything in the 'BERT score' box on the Eye Casualty Referral form until you receive the specific guidance.

➤ **Ophthalmic Drugs used**

This is necessary and will assist the clinician in EC with their further investigation of the patient e.g. if the patient has had dilating drops instilled it is very useful to know when, and what drug was used, so that the EC clinician knows whether a pupil has been intentionally dilated or, whether the dilated pupil is due to the underlying condition. Similarly the same considerations apply with topical anaesthesia and drug-induced reduced corneal sensation.

➤ **Provisional Diagnosis/Reason for Eye Casualty referral**

As with all referrals, it is important to indicate the primary reason for referral. Any additional ocular concerns can be included but the main reason should be clearly indicated to enable the most appropriate Eye Casualty investigations to be undertaken. This section can also be used to indicate if any photographs or scans are being attached to the referral, or sent separately to Eye Casualty.

➤ **Advice to Patient**

It is important to include information on advice that you have given to the patient about their condition so that the EC clinician is aware of the patient's knowledge of the condition and any 'intermediate' treatment or management that you have advised, to enable continuity of care.

➤ **Patient Declaration and Signature**

Patient consent to sharing of their clinical information is required if you wish to receive feedback on your referral from the EC clinician.

B: Reverse/Back page - Eye Casualty Feedback Form

➤ **Optometry Practice/Optomtrist Address Box**

Please complete this carefully, within the boundaries of the box. The form will be folded so that your address is visible in the envelope window for return to you.

➤ **Eye Casualty Feedback Section**

This information is feedback for the referring optometrist for learning and development of the acute eyecare pathway. It is hoped that you will find this useful.

Note: all practitioners are asked to use this new form. Should you choose to continue to write a letter of your own formatting you will not receive direct feedback from Eye Casualty.

Important Reminders

- In **all** cases of referral to Eye Casualty the patient **must** be given a **referral form (or letter if preferred) to take with them to the clinic**. Even though some clinical information may have been provided to Eye Casualty during the telephone call to arrange the appointment, it is important and essential that the full clinical information is detailed on the referral form (or a referral letter if preferred) and given to the patient to take with them. This will ensure that the EC clinician seeing the patient has access to all the required clinical information.
- **Urgent Macular Referrals:** Optometrists are reminded that urgent referrals to the macular service for Wet AMD, Retinal Vein Occlusion (RVO) and Diabetic Macular Oedema (DMO) should be made directly to the macular service using either the Macular Referral template in **CCG** or, for non-portal users, the paper macular referral form, accessed at the following link:
<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3185.htm>
- **Use of NICER:** Please remember to check the patient's NIECR where appropriate as important ophthalmic clinical information may be hosted which can have a bearing on your referral. An Optometrist can access a patient's NIECR without prior consent if it is in the interest of direct clinical care, including preparation for an assessment; the Optometrist can subsequently discuss the NIECR access/viewing with the patient as appropriate.

This new Regional Eye Casualty Referral form is being trialled for a period and further development, including possibly electronic solutions, will be considered. The HSCB hope that you will find it simple and straightforward to use and that the clinical feedback will be helpful. Your commitment to these ophthalmic service developments is much appreciated.

For further information, queries, feedback on the form or, Eye Casualty referrals in general, please contact ophthalmic.services@hscni.net.