



Dear Colleague,

New Urgent Eye Care Referral Pathway for Ophthalmology

We are writing to inform you of some important changes within the Ophthalmology service at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust.

Following on from a GP learning event and feedback received from Optometrists, it was reported that the Ophthalmology Urgent Eye Care pathway was difficult for GPs and Optometrists to navigate.

Therefore, as part of the wider Ophthalmology service redesign, an electronic referral system was developed and piloted within the Burnley locality along with 3 Optometry practices to ensure that the system was fit for purpose before being rolled out across East Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen. The pathway also includes an urgent telephone hotline number which is available Monday – Friday 9am – 6.30pm. These developments have been guided by the feedback we have received.

The service is managed and delivered by East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust. The Urgent Eye Care Pathway has been developed to streamline the way urgent referrals are made and to ensure that the pathway and the experience for the patient is as seamless and efficient as can be. This is one part of a wider programme of work which will be communicated in due course.

Our Project team have compiled a pack of information to explain about the Urgent Eye Care Pathway and the new referral method which includes:

- Core briefing note
- Referral pathway flowchart
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Referral Proforma

For more information about the service changes contact Cath Thompson, Departmental Manager and Senior Nursing Sister at catherine.thompson@elht.nhs.uk or 01254 733241 (Royal Blackburn Hospital)/01282 803110 (Burnley General Hospital).

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New **Urgent** eye care referral pathway for Ophthalmology

There are some
important changes
that **YOU** need to
know about!

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Core Brief

East Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen CCGs confirmed early last year they were to re-design Ophthalmology as an integrated service where patients are seen closer to home; by the right person in the right place at the right time; and to give patients the ability to move seamlessly between levels of care as necessary.

The new service promotes an electronic referral pathway for both GPs and Optometrists. Referrals are accepted by completing the urgent referral proforma and emailing Ward 6 on ward6aereferrals.elht@nhs.net. Referrals will be triaged as a minimum every two hours, and a read receipt can also be requested by the referrer. If the outcome identifies the need for an urgent appointment, the patient will be contacted by the Ophthalmic team who will offer an appointment within a timeframe appropriate to their needs. For those who are triaged as non-urgent need, the referral will be returned to the requester, with triage feedback. If there is then considered the need for a routine referral, this will then follow the normal Choose and Book pathway.

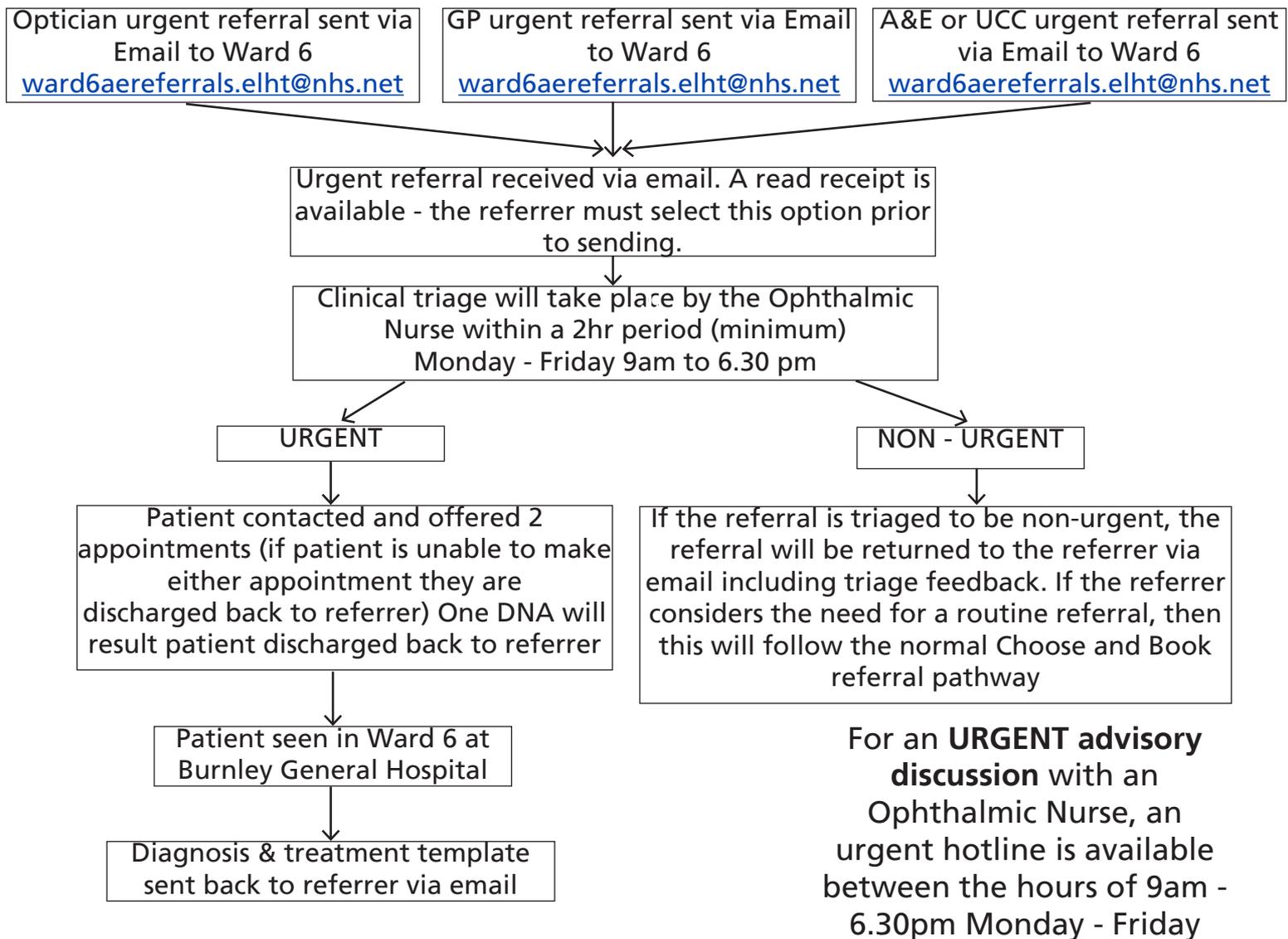
The urgent referral pathway will incorporate the following changes:

- A streamlined electronic process.
- A dedicated telephone hotline to a specialist trained Ophthalmic nurse with access to consult with an Ophthalmology doctor as and when necessary.
- Triage will be completed within a two - hour timeframe (Monday – Friday 9.00 – 18.30). Referrals received outside of these days/hours will be triaged within 2 hours of the start of the next working day.
- Same day patient contact, following triage.
- An “out of hours” doctor is contactable after 6.30pm Monday - Friday and at weekends via the East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust Switchboard on 01282 425071.
- The referrer will receive a diagnosis and treatment report within two working days of the patient assessment.

We appreciate that there will be a cross-over of referral methods whilst this transition takes place. However, the service and commissioners will strive to work closely with you to ensure that the correct pathways are followed.

Please note that this is one part of a wider programme of work which will be communicated in due course.

Urgent Ophthalmic Referral Pathway (Ward 6)



**URGENT HOT LINE:
07944 189984**

An "out of hours" doctor is contactable after 6.30pm Monday - Friday and at weekends via the East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust Switchboard on (01282 425071).



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What should I do if I have a patient with an eye emergency, presenting “out of hours”, that is after 18.30hrs week-day and at weekends?

A. There is a Doctor on call for eye emergencies “out of hours” who can be contacted, via switchboard at Burnley General Hospital, 01282 425071; you will still need to also follow this up with a referral emailed to : ward6aereferrals.elht@nhs.net

Q. If I ring the Ophthalmology urgent hot line, who will I speak with; will it be a Doctor or Nurse?

A. It will be an Ophthalmic Nurse; all of whom are specialist trained and highly experienced. The nurse will undertake triage but is able to consult with an Ophthalmology doctor, as and when necessary.

Q. Do I always have to ring the “in hours” referral through to the urgent “hot line”?

A. No, this is at your discretion but you always need to email the completed urgent referral proforma.

Q. Will I always have to use the ophthalmology urgent referral proforma?

A. Yes, it is essential that the urgent referral proforma is completed, to the best of your ability, at your assessment with the patient; this will assist you with clinical decision making on the urgency and relevance of referral and will provide ophthalmology with as much relevant and accurate clinical information, from which to effectively triage the urgent referral.

Q. Where do I email the urgent referral and how will I know it has been received and read?

A. Referrals need to be emailed to ward6aereferrals.elht@nhs.net. If the referrer wishes to know when the emailed urgent referral is read, then he/she must request the ‘read receipt’ option on their computer, before sending the referral.

Q. How often will urgent referrals to ward6aereferrals.elht@nhs.net be read?

A. Emailed urgent referrals, received in the ward6 inbox, will be triaged every 2 hours, as a minimum, during Mon-Fri 9.00 – 18.30. Referrals received out of these days/hours will be triaged, within 2 hours of the start of the next working day. Note: you must not batch urgent referrals at the end of the day but send each urgent referral at the time of seeing the patient during the day.

Q. If the triage outcome identifies the need for an urgent Ophthalmology appointment, when will this take place?

A. Ophthalmology will contact the patient and offer an urgent appointment within a time frame appropriate to their needs; the patient will be offered choice of a maximum 2 urgent appointments; if unable to attend either of the 2 urgent appointments, they will be discharged back to the referrer, as will those who DNA.

Q. If the triage outcome identifies non-urgent need, what will happen to my referral?

A. The referral will be returned to the referrer, with triage feedback. If the referrer then considers the need for a routine referral, then this will follow the routine Choose and Book referral pathway.

Q. Will my urgent referral patterns be monitored?

A. Yes, Ophthalmology will keep records on the volume and appropriateness of all urgent referrals. Findings will be shared with EL and BwD CCGs and, where appropriate, the information will be used to inform learning and education plans, for referrers.

Q. What should I do if a patient presents with flashes and floaters?

A. If a patient discloses symptoms of a sudden onset of flashes and floaters, then this should follow the urgent eye pathway. The triage nurse will communicate with the patient, to assess the case and determine the appropriate course of action. This may be an appointment in the urgent eye clinic but, as is often clinically appropriate in these cases, it may be that an accredited optometrist is well placed to provide this urgent assessment and plan of care, within the community. The triage nurse will agree and make all necessary arrangements directly with the patient.

Ophthalmology Emergency Referral – Ward 6
ward6aereferrals.elht@nhs.net

East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust
 NHS East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group
 NHS Blackburn with Darwen Clinical Commissioning Group

Patient Details:					
Name		DOB		Gender	
NHS No		Hospital No			
Address		Postcode		UK Resident	
Mobile No		Home Tel		Referral date	
Main Spoken Language		interpreter Required?		Any Known Allergies	
Referring Practitioner Name and Address:					

Presenting Symptoms:	RE	LE	Duration
Sudden loss of vision			
sudden loss of visual field			
Sudden onset central distortion (straight lines/kinked/wavy)			
Sudden onset unilateral flashes/floaters			
Severe pain with nausea/red eye or on eye movement			
Sudden onset diplopia <2/52 (disappears on closing one eye)			
Recent post-operative Px with pain/deterioration of vision			
Presenting signs:	RE	LE	Duration
Corneal opacity in red eye with pain (esp in CL wearer)			
Painful eye with redness around the corneal margin			
Red eye with herpetic lesions in the periocular area			
Blunt trauma/injury			
Blow-out fracture			
Penetrating eye injury			
Chemical injury			
Retinal tear/hole/detachment			
Pre-septal cellulitis			
Corneal abrasion			
Suspect Condition			

Right Eye		Left eye
	Vision/VA	
	Lids	
	Conjunctiva	
	Cornea	
	Pupils	
	Fundus	
	Intra-ocular pressure	

For Ward 6 use only

patient contacted: _____ Appointment: _____
 email reply sent to referring practitioner by: _____ Date: _____

Further Information and Feedback

Please find below contact details for further support or feedback regarding the referral:

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS:

Contact the IT Switchboard on 01254 226900
or email servicedesk@lancashirecsu.nhs.uk

OPTOMETRISTS:

Blackburn with Darwen:

Contact Sophie Yates on 01254 282276
or email sophie.yates@blackburnwithdarwenccg.nhs.uk

East Lancashire:

Contact Donna Parker on 01282 644518
or email donna.parker@eastlancscg.nhs.uk