

Cataract Pre-Operative Assessment Protocol

Potential routes for optometric pre-op assessment

1. The patient indicates problems during a General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) or private sight test.
2. A GP receives a referral from a non-accredited practitioner and advises the patient to seek an assessment by an accredited optometrist.
3. A non-accredited practitioner advises the patient to seek an assessment by an accredited optometrist.
4. The Hospital Eye Service (HES) advises the patient to seek an assessment by an optometrist on the accredited list.

Inclusion criteria

Practitioners

- The practitioner must be a qualified optometrist registered with the GOC, and must work an average of at least 2 sessions (1 day) in Halton & St Helens and/or Knowsley per week.
- The optometrist must satisfy any accreditation the Primary Care Trusts deem suitable and must sign the agreement form. The optometrist personally, not the practice(s) where he or she works, is accredited to the service. Only accredited optometrists may carry out assessments and claim the appropriate fee.
- The practitioner must have adequate indemnity insurance up to £2,000,000. (This is covered by membership of the Association of Optometrists)
- The practitioner must attend any training sessions organised by the PCTs.
- The practitioner must be willing to undergo an audit of their work within the scheme.
- Persistent or gross failure to comply with the terms of this protocol and agreement may lead to suspension or termination of accreditation by the PCTs. The PCTs reserves the right to refuse, suspend or cancel accreditation.

Inclusion criteria

Patients

- Patients must be registered with a GP on the Halton & St Helens or Knowsley medical list.
- Patients must be willing to complete the questionnaire.
- Patients must be willing to undergo the procedures, following adequate explanation.
- Patients must be willing to be referred direct to a Referral Centre operating choose and book, rather than via their GP.
- Patients must sign the consent form.

If a patient is unwilling or unable to accept the above, then he or she is not eligible for assessment under this scheme and should be referred via the usual referral methods, i.e. local direct referral form or indirectly to the GP by GOS18 or letterhead.

Booking a Cataract Assessment

If the patient has been referred to the accredited list by the GP or HES, carry out a standard sight test first, unless they have had one within the last 3 months.

When booking the assessment, please give patients a Self-assessment Questionnaire and Cataract leaflet. Ask them to complete this questionnaire and return on their second visit. Also encourage them to bring along a copy of a recent prescription list; this, or a photocopy, can be attached to the questionnaire.

Assessment by Optometrists

The patient should be given the Health questionnaire to fill in at home and bring along to the assessment. Also, encourage the patient to bring along a copy of recent medication.

The assessment should include:

- ✓ Measure pupil size before dilation
- ✓ Dilated funduscopy with Volk Lens and SL-BIO*
- ✓ External slit-lamp examination
- ✓ Slit-lamp examination of lens opacities
- ✓ Measure pupil size after dilation
- ✓ Discussion of surgical procedure
- ✓ Discussion of pros and cons of surgery
- ✓ Compilation of assessment form
- ✓ Decision on whether to refer, in conjunction with the patient, possibly including relatives or carers

* If contra-indicated, examine using direct ophthalmoscopy, but record the reasons on the report form.

All of the clinical assessment may be completed in 1 visit or parts may be split over several appointments, depending on what is most convenient. However, the final decision on whether referral is indicated should be taken at least 1 week after the initial visit, preferably with the patient and their relative or carer present. This allows a period of reflection and consideration for the patient.

Following the assessment, if you need to refer the patient to the HES, please hand the questionnaire back to the patient and ask them to take it along to their first appointment with their preferred provider.

There are booklets and an Excel spreadsheet available with information regarding the different providers. These can be given to the patient for consideration of which provider they wish to choose. You may wish to have an initial discussion on choice of provider, but the final choice will be made with the choice team once they receive the referral

Fully inform patients of the potential benefits and risks of cataract surgery. Please refer to the report on risks and complications as a guideline. Encourage patients to ask questions about cataract and the surgical process at the time of assessment and at any time afterwards.

Electronic Assessment Form

1. Fill in an electronic assessment form for each patient, ensuring you complete all relevant details.
2. Decide further management options:
 - a) Refer for surgery
 - b) Review in 6 or 12 months
 - c) Discharge to GOS.
3. If referral for cataract surgery is indicated, fax a copy of the report form to:

For Knowsley PCT
Alistair MacFarlane,
Choice Co-ordinator
Knowsley PCT
Tel: 0151 443 4851
Fax: 0151 443 4852

For Halton & St Helens PCT
Sue Cannon,
Choice Co-ordinator
Knowsley PCT
Tel: 0151 495 1942
Fax: 0151 495 9251

4. You should receive confirmation of the patient's choice of provider.
5. Send a copy of the form to the GP:
6. Keep a copy of the form with the patient's record card.
7. Private surgery: If patients wish to have surgery at a private hospital, please refer them directly to the surgeon of choice, enclosing the top copy of the referral form. You should still send a copy to the patient's GP

Private Referrals

For patients wishing to be seen privately by a Rennie Eye Clinic consultant, each of them sees private patients at Fairfield Hospital. The contact details are:

Mr N Cota	Fairfield Hospital
Mr M Hiranandani	Crank Road
Mr P W Joyce	Crank
	St Helens
	WA11 7RS
Telephone:	01744 739311
Fax:	01744 453358

Criteria indicating suitability for referral for surgery

- **Patient willing to undergo cataract surgery**
- **Patient able to undergo cataract surgery**
- Reduced visual acuity (VA) in affected eye/s, at least partly attributable to significant cataract development. If other co-existing ocular disease may be reducing VA, consider whether cataract surgery will make a significant improvement
- Glare or other visual disturbances
- Experiencing difficulty with normal day-to-day activities
- Good social support

Domiciliary visits

If patients have been seen originally on a domiciliary visit, please carry out an assessment **only if** they can attend the practice and undergo another examination. Please refer them directly using the standard direct referral form.

Claiming for cataract assessments

Ask patients to fill in a consent form, allowing the assessment to take place. The accredited optometrist carrying out the assessment will sign the second part of the consent form.

Please send the completed consent form to Central Operations Mersey (COM) to claim the £40 payment. The payment will be made via automated payment, along with the usual GOS monthly payments. This will show up on the monthly payment analysis as a separate item, headed "cataract".

Stationery

To carry out the service you need the following files:

- Consent form
- Electronic Assessment Form
- Patient self-assessment questionnaire
- Patient information leaflet
- Referral Centre patient leaflet

All files are printable and are available on the LOC website at <http://www.loc-net.org.uk/sthelensknowsleyloc/index.html>

The files will be regularly revised when there are significant changes to protocol and stationery. If you have difficulty using the CD, please refer to the guidance documents for usage and installation. If you still experience problems contact:

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Primary Care Trusts
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bob@rdwilkes.co.uk