

INFORMATION FOR DEVON PRIMARY CARE OPTOMETRISTS

(Updated 02/04/2020) WEEU UPDATE: RE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

We are writing to inform our primary care colleagues regarding recent changes within the department:

- The government is encouraging social distancing, self-isolation and shielding for vulnerable groups
- The Trust is preparing for the possibility of an increased rate in sickness absence amongst staff as well as the possibility that staff and resources may be required elsewhere.
- Patients pose a risk to other patients and staff. In the present situation, the overall risk is reduced if fewer patients attend.

WEEU CHANGES

- Cataract clinics are discontinued until further notice and will be rebooked at a later stage by longest waiting
- Ophthalmology Surgery at Axminster and Sidmouth and routine operations at WEEU have been cancelled for the foreseeable future.
- Routine non urgent outpatient appointments are being postponed for at least 3/12
- Yag Capsulotomy appointments will be cancelled and rebooked later
- Urgent appointments are currently being triaged
- Further, more detailed advice may follow as the situation develops, however, management is likely to be based on the RCOphth Ophthalmology Escalation policy
<https://rcophth.ac.uk/2020/03/covid-19-update-and-resources-for-ophthalmologists/>
- Intravitreal anti VegF injections will continue at fixed dosing with minimal clinical follow up.
- The current emergency telephone triage service is expanding and the number of “urgent” clinic slots are being increased.
- The triage service will be staffed by a team of experienced ophthalmic clinicians with support from Consultant Ophthalmologists.
- An advice and guidance email address will be set up for GP and Local Optometrists (TBC)
- The hospital paediatric spectacle dispensing service is closed to non-urgent patients.

(cont)

ACTIONS FOR OPTOMETRISTS:

- Please keep up to date with RCOph and College of Optometrists guidance.
- Every effort will be made to see the Ophthalmic high-risk patients.
- Ophthalmic medium and low risk patients: **Defer or phone the triage line for advice.**
- Please remember that the A&E eye service is for patients who have an imminent threat to sight. Do not send any patients to A&E if they have symptoms of Covid -19. **Phone the triage line for advice.**
- Please support our paediatric patients with any urgent adjustments or urgent repairs required by using GOS4 vouchers.
- **Paediatric/ Orthoptic service: Please telephone 01392 406031 for advice:**
- For adults with diplopia/ eye movement problems: Include details of duration of onset and whether symptoms are stable or worsening. Detail if patient is reporting any other new systemic symptoms associated with the onset of diplopia
- Please provide a telephone contact number for all patients referred to the hospital eye service

TELEPHONE TRIAGE: 01392 402399

OPEN 7 DAYS 9am to 6pm

Thank you for your support and patience during this difficult time.