

## Ophthalmology - First Eye Outpatient Appointment

### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you are able to support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

When you are waiting for further treatment it can sometimes feel like a long wait. The information and advice here is aimed at helping you manage that wait so you arrive for your appointment in the best possible physical and mental health.

The NHS has limited resources which means that we are unable to treat you as quickly as we would like. Each healthcare provider has to consider the type of help you need, how quickly you need treatment, the best course of action to help you and when and where you can be seen.

The process of sorting patients based on their individual needs is called prioritisation. The system of prioritisation is applied consistently across the NHS to help us to decide the order in which patients receive their treatment. This is essential to ensure that we provide care based on need. The system means that care is delivered in the fairest way possible.

Once a referral has been made from primary care to secondary care, the specialist team conduct assessments and then agree with you on the right course of action. At this stage, the urgency will be assessed. If you have a long-term health condition, for example, you may need treatment faster than someone without.

### Guidance for Patients

When you attend your first outpatient appointment you will meet several professionals and may have several tests conducted. The aim of this is to find out what problems you are having with your vision. It is important that you do not drive to your appointment as you will need to have your pupils dilated with eye drops. These cause blurry vision for a few hours.

You will be able to have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

### What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If your eye becomes very painful and painkillers aren't relieving the pain; if you experience a shower of floaters and flashing lights, or if your eye is red and/or your vision worse or cloudy please contact the Eye Unit Emergency Department on 0300 019 4181. They are open 7 days a week, Monday- Friday 8-5pm, 08:30-5:30pm Saturday and 08:30-2pm Sunday.

# My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

## Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

## Contact Us

If you should have any questions please contact any of the following departments:

Eye unit ward: 0300 019 6062

Acute Referral Clinic (in case of emergency):

0300 019 4181

Hospital switchboard

please ask for your consultant's secretary:

01202 303626

Admissions: 0300 019 4366

Appointment enquiries: 0300 019 4355

Eye Outpatients 0300 019 6036