

Referring To Ophthalmic Emergency Triage Service.

As you will be aware, the Emergency Departments in both Scarborough and York are extremely overstretched. The departments receive a number of emergency eye referrals that would be better referred directly to ophthalmology as it is unlikely that the staff in A&E have the expertise or equipment to deal with eye emergencies that cannot be managed by primary care.

To avoid patients having a long and frustrating wait in A&E, this document provides a guide as to how to refer to the local hospital eye service directly.

York and Scarborough:

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, and weekends 9am to 2pm

Main telephone number (may be shared with patients): 01904 726758
GP 'Hotline' with voicemail function (for GP use only): 01904 725332

1. In the first instance GPs should contact the Emergency Triage Nurse Practitioners on **01904 726758**. A trained nurse practitioner will take your call and give appropriate advice or an appointment. If they need to they can speak to an ophthalmologist for advice.

Safety-netting: If you are given an appointment for a patient and are concerned about what they should do if they have a deterioration before that date you should consider giving them the phone number above so that they can contact the appropriate eye department directly for advice or to expedite their visit.

2. The above telephone line can be very busy; if you do not need to speak directly to the triage nurse, GPs can now leave referral requests on our GP only voicemail referral line. Please advise the patient that they will receive a call from the service within 3 hours, and provide them with the service telephone number **01904 726758** to call in the unlikely event that they have not received a call. The referral can then be left as a

voicemail message as per the instructions below. **N.B. the voicemail service is only available during the times given above. If any voicemails are left outside of these hours, they will not be picked up until the following working day.**

- Call on GP 'hotline' number : **01904 725332**
 - You will be asked to provide the following information:
 - Your name and contact telephone number.
 - Name of GP practice
 - Name of patient
 - Address of patient
 - Date of Birth
 - NHS number
 - Contact number for patient.
 - Brief details of eye condition, and reason for referral.
3. An Ophthalmic Nurse will contact your patient within 3 hours, to arrange an appointment if necessary.
4. An email will be sent by the service to the GP practice email address to confirm that the referral has been received and accepted. If the referral is redirected to an alternative service, for example the Minor Eye Conditions Service (MECS), a notification will be sent by email.

Outside of the hours given above, phone York Hospital on 01904 631313 and ask for the on call ophthalmologist. Please be prepared for some delay as this doctor may be seeing patients or may be driving between sites.

Symptoms that should prompt the patient to seek emergency medical care, if needs be via A&E.

These are likely conditions with a possible threat to life such as

- Acute onset of hemianopia (? stroke)
- Amaurosis fugax recurring more than once over 24 hours (imminent risk of stroke)
- Papilloedema with neurological symptoms or new severe headache and or vomiting
- Sudden onset of 3rd nerve palsy (less than a week) with pain
- Any acute onset cranial nerve palsy in a child