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Countess of Chester NHS  
Foundation Trust  
Post-operative Cataract Pathway &  
Protocols

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Service Provided by:

Primary  
Eyecare

## Outline Description

The post-operative cataract pathway is designed to improve the patient journey by reducing the number of patient visits overall and to include as few visits to secondary care as possible.

It provides a comparable service for people who are unable to leave their home unaccompanied but who are able to attend for surgery.

For the purpose of the guidance 'The Provider' is the optical practice providing the post-operative examination.

## Purpose of Service

Using the skills of primary care optical practices to support follow up of uncomplicated patients, patient care will be improved by:

- Providing rapid access, high quality service to patients with cataract
- Ensuring equity of service including provision to housebound individuals
- Reducing the total number of patient visits
- Reducing the number of visits the patient makes to secondary care
- Reducing waiting lists
- Improving the quality of referrals
- Supporting care closer to home
- Providing accurate data about outcomes and patient satisfaction

## Description

### Post-operative Cataract Service

Following day case uncomplicated cataract surgery at the Countess of Chester NHS Foundation Trust the Patient is discharged with appropriate instructions and medication. If the Patient experiences a red or painful eye in the weeks following the operation, they are instructed to seek help immediately from the treatment centre.

The patient is discharged via the electronic IT platform to an accredited primary care optometrist of their choice (the Provider). The Provider will regularly log into the IT platform (at least 3 times per week), so that they are aware of patients discharged to their care. The Provider will acknowledge the patients via the IT system to make the surgery provider aware that they accepted the patient into their care.

The Provider will contact the patient to arrange the necessary appointments for their post-op examination and GOS refraction 3-5 weeks post-surgery.

If all is well the Patient will attend their post-op examination and the optometrist will carry out the assessment and determine the outcome.

## Assessment

The assessment will include full history and symptoms and examination of the anterior and posterior eye to exclude possible complications from cataract surgery.

## Outcomes

If the Patient is happy, the eye is white, and vision is good the optometrist will:

- Complete the IT reporting form. The IT system will send the appropriate information to the treatment centre and GP within 24 hours of seeing the patient
- Refer to the treatment centre for second eye op if appropriate in line with local protocol
- Discharge the Patient and advise on the interval before next routine sight test

If there any signs of post-operative complications, the optometrist will:

- refer back to the treatment centre with the appropriate urgency – this will be via the platform for routine referrals and via local protocol where it is urgent.

## Patients who fail to engage with the service (FTE)

The Provider must make a reasonable number of attempts to contact the patient to arrange the post-operative examination appointment. **At least** 2 attempts should be made to contact the patient by telephone at different times of the day, if no response/or this is not possible then a letter must be sent to the patients to request they contact the provider to arrange the appointment. (see Appendix1)

A separate record of these instances should be kept for quality monitoring purposes.

If a patient fails to engage with the service within the 4 weeks of the date of surgery, i.e. does not respond to attempts to contact them, this must be recorded on the IT system. The IT system will automatically notify the surgical provider.

## Cancelled appointments

If a patient cancels an appointment, within reasonable notice, the Provider must arrange an alternative appointment at least once. This must be within a reasonable time frame in terms of clinical appropriateness and patient experience.

The new appointment time must be recorded on the IT system

## Waiting times

On arrival at the service for an appointment, patients must be seen as near to as possible as their appointment time with a wait of no more than 30 minutes to see the post-cataract accredited clinician.

## Management of DNAs

Should a patient fail to arrive for their appointment, the Provider will be expected to contact the patient by telephone within 24 hours informing them that they have missed their appointment, giving them appropriate advice and asking them to rearrange. If this is not possible to contact the patient by telephone, a letter should be sent. The new appointment time/date must be recorded on the IT system.

If there is no response to the letter this should be recorded on the IT system. The IT system will automatically notify the surgical provider.

A separate record of these instances should be kept for quality monitoring purposes.

The contracting authority will not accept any charges for DNAs.

## Reallocating patient to another practice

If a patient indicates that they wish to attend an alternative practice for their post-op examination, the Provider must first establish if this practice provides the post-op service.

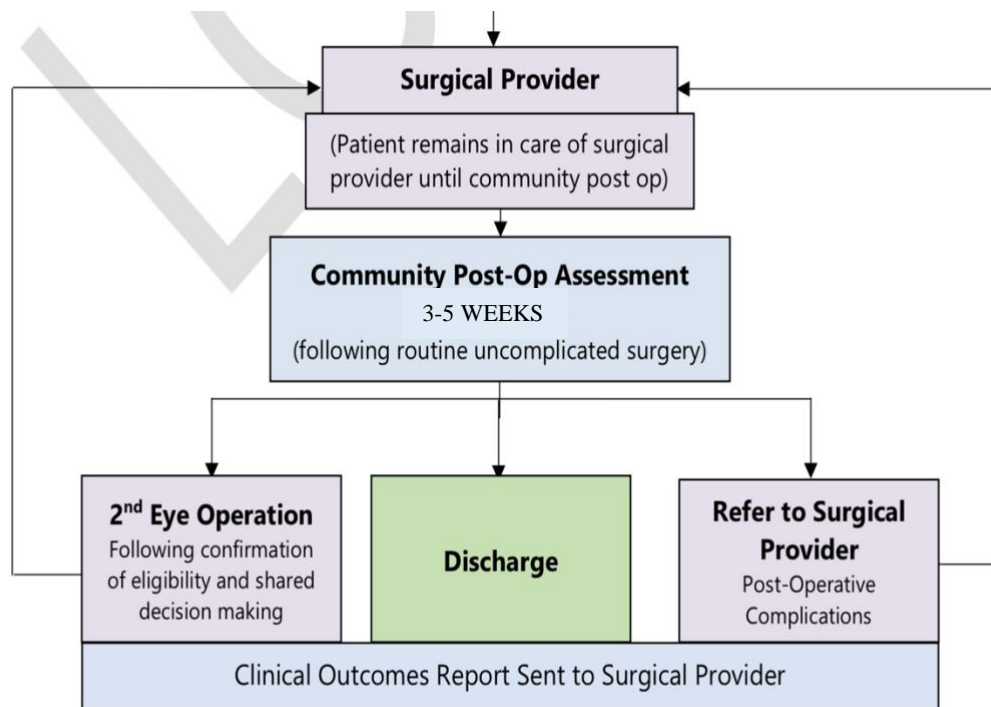
If they do then reallocation to a new practice should be logged on the IT platform – indicating which providing optical practice the patient wishes to attend,

If they do not, then the patient will either need to return to the surgery provider for their post op exam, attend the Providers practice or choose an alternative providing practice.

## Domiciliary Patients

To qualify for a domiciliary GOS sight test, the patient must fall into one of the NHS eligibility categories and be unable to leave home unaccompanied. Generally, the post-operative cataract assessment will be carried out in their home. Portable Slit Lamp examination will be required.

## Post-operative Cataract Pathway



## Equality Monitoring & Patient Experience Feedback

As part of the requirement to monitor this service all providers will be required to provide patients with an Equality & Diversity and Patient Experience Feedback questionnaire and input the results into the IT platform. Note this will be at the end of the cataract pathway after a completed follow up. This feedback is on the provision of the service by the optometrist not the outcome of the surgery or the service received at the Countess of Chester NHS foundation Trust.

## Equipment

All practices contracted to supply the service will be expected to employ an accredited practitioner and have the following equipment available.

- Access to the Internet
- Fax machine to enable confidential urgent referral if required (until alternative arrangements are put in place)
- Means of indirect ophthalmoscopy (Volk/headset indirect ophthalmoscope)
- Slit lamp (portable slit lamp, if intend to deliver as domiciliary provider)
- Contact tonometer
- Distance test chart (Snellen/logmar) / Near test type
- Appropriate ophthalmic drugs
  - Mydriatic / Anaesthetic / Staining agents

## Competencies

All participating practitioners will have the core competencies as defined by the GOC and must meet the accreditation requirements as below.

Participating practitioners must complete the WOPEC Cardiff University/LOCSU Cataract Distance Learning modules.

All practitioners partaking in the provision of the service must also completed Safeguarding Level 2 training. For optometrists this is the DOCET Children's and Adult's Safeguarding Certificate.

Participating practitioners will also be expected to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

## Appendix 1 – Example FTE letter

OPTICIANS PRACTICE ADDRESS AND  
CONTACT DETAILS

Patients address:

Date:

Dear

**RE: Post cataract surgery assessment appointment.**

Following your cataract surgery at the Countess of Chester Hospital you have been referred to us to have your post cataract surgery assessment carried out by an Optometrist (Optician).

We have made attempts to contact you by telephone to arrange this important assessment yet have been unable to contact you. I would be grateful if you would contact us on the number above to arrange this appointment stating that it is for a “POST CATARACT SURGERY ASSESSMENT”.

**This is part of your FREE NHS treatment, you will not be charged for this appointment.**

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely