



East Sussex Local Optical Committee

11th July 2023

Dear Colleagues,

East Sussex LOC (ESLOC) are aware there has been some confusion over the current cataract pathway, regarding which forms to use and where patients can be referred. Following the previous change in NICE guidelines, which states that the decision to proceed to surgery cannot be based on the patient's visual acuity and should be based on their symptoms and lifestyle needs.

ESLOC have been working with the new Sussex ICB, which now replaces the previous CCGs, to implement the new referral criteria. Following various consultations including patient representatives, a new form has been designed for community referrals into secondary care. For those of you who work around or refer into East Sussex Health Trust (ESHT) you will be aware of the requirement of the CAQ questionnaire needing to be filled out, however, this did have some dependence on visual acuity. This form needed to be replaced and the plan is to have one single form that can be used for all secondary referrals.

We are currently in discussion with Sussex ICB over the tariffs as, for some of you, this would mean additional work and ESLOC are of the view that if the referral process is the same across the patch, then the tariff should be the same.

Until we can confirm the new tariffs, we have agreed to issue the new forms to our members but to only fill out the relevant sections depending on where the referral is being sent. This will mean you are not doing any additional work until we can standardise the fee.

You will find the forms included with this letter but they will also be available in various formats on the East Sussex LOC website shortly, under the Professionals tab:

<https://www.loc-online.co.uk/eastsussex-loc/>

Form details:

You will see the form is split into 4 pages:

Page 1: This is replacement for the current referral form that includes the patient and practitioner's details.

Page 2: This is used to select which hospital the patient would like to be referred to. You can use the "other" box to denote any independent hospital commissioned to provide cataract surgery. (See table below for further information).

Page 3: This is the replacement for the CAQ and no longer asks for visual acuity as a measure for referral and is to be used with the patient to determine the level of their symptoms. There is no scoring anymore or minimum requirement for referral, however, this is more a tool to determine if it is in the best interest of the patient to proceed to surgery.

Page 4: Accessibility information.

www.eastsussexloc.org.uk

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Independent Sector Providers (ISP's)

Sussex ICB have commissioned a number of ISPs in our area to provide Cataract surgery. The process to refer to these providers is the same as the trusts. Please note, if your patient has any co-morbidities e.g. Glaucoma, wet AMD, Uveitis or is under the care of a hospital eye department it may be advisable to keep them there for continuity of care.

See below for a break down on which hospital require which forms in our local area for your reference.:

Hospital	Location	ISP	Pages To fill
Benenden	Benenden Kent		1,2 & 3
Bexhill	Bexhill		1,2 & 3
Eastbourne	Eastbourne		1,2 & 3
Spa Medica Brighton	Sayers Common	✓	1 & 2
Spa Medica Bexhill	Bexhill	✓	1 & 2
Sussex Eye Hospital	Brighton		1 & 2
Sussex Premier Health	St. Leonards -on-sea	✓	1 & 2
Optegra	Brighton	✓	1 & 2
Queen Victoria	East Grinstead		1 & 2

Currently all referrals are via the GP, however, we are working with the ICS to implement an electronic referral system called REGO, which is still in the testing phase, this will allow for direct referral to the patients chosen hospital. We will keep you informed on the progress of this system as we know further.

Please note the post op services from all providers remains unchanged for now.

Regards,

East Sussex LOC

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