

29th January 2020

Dear Optometrists,

1. Moorfields A&E has seen a significant rise in patients being sent from community optometrists, often from very long distances, where closer emergency ophthalmic provision is available. In many cases, patients are sent to A&E without any discussion or referral letter. An internal audit revealed that 40% of emergency referrals to A&E do not require an A&E attendance.
2. We have also seen a large rise in Optometrist referrals (GOS-18) to GPs asking for 1-2 week appointments which GPs are unable to obtain. These patients are frequently sent to A&E, which then doubles the cost to CCGs (as the A&E attendance and subsequent clinic review are both charged for separately). Such cases are usually inappropriate for A&E review. Should you need to make such a request, please do not send them to A&E. It is usually better to telephone your local eye unit and ask for the most appropriate pathway for the patient (e.g. AMD, Glaucoma Pathway etc).
3. As it is local CCGs who foot the bill for such attendances, we will need to feedback directly to them. **Please remember that A&E is for genuine and potentially sight threatening emergencies only.**
4. We have also seen an increase in patients being sent to us while already under the care of other units requesting second opinions. We do not offer second opinions in the A&E department, and as such, patients will be reverted back to the original referrer.
5. Most hospitals with an eye department have internal daytime emergency provision. Please follow local emergency referral guidelines during business hours. If you do not know the local referral pathway, please speak with the clinical lead at your local hospital eye service who will advise you of how to make emergency referrals. They should also have an out of hours emergency pathway by way of a service level agreement with another Trust if they do not provide an out of hours service in their own unit.
6. Please note that Moorfields A&E uses an active triage system. If your referral is inappropriate for A&E they may be triaged to another unit or back to you for onward referral. This includes reverting patients to a more local or appropriate service if required.
7. If in doubt – discuss with your local unit or closest ophthalmic emergency department.

**As of Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 we request that you telephone us to discuss A&E referrals, if geographically appropriate for Moorfields A&E.**

**Moorfields A&E Direct: 020 7521 4682 available 24/7**

**(Consultant 8.30-17.00 Upper House after 17.00h)**

**In Hours Emergencies:**

**Please call your local or closest eye unit to discuss the referral.**

**Out of Hours Emergencies:**

**Please ask your local hospital eye service clinical lead what safe pathway they have in place for out of hours emergency referrals.**

**In most cases, there will be an out of hours arrangement for emergency eye care.**

**If appropriate for Moorfields A&E :**

**Call Moorfields A&E Direct: 020 7521 4682**

**If your patient is accepted by Moorfields A&E then you must write the accepting doctor's name on your referral letter.**

**A&E is only for genuinely sight threatening emergencies which require immediate treatment.**

**Most general A&E departments can treat minor conditions such as abrasions etc. Many self-care items such as lubricants, chloramphenicol, allergic eye drops can be purchased over the counter and do not require an A&E or GP attendance.**

There are many other units in central London providing emergency eye care. Please ensure you liaise with the closest available unit. Regrettably we do not have capacity in our A&E to pick up all London-wide ophthalmic emergencies. Outside the central London area, you should discuss local referral pathways with your local eye unit.

**Out of Hours Emergency Units: Central London**

**South:**

St George's Hospital 24/7  
Kings College Hospital 24/7  
St Thomas's Hospital 24/7

**North:**

Royal Free Hospital 24/7

**West:**

Western Eye Hospital 24/7

**East/Central:**

Moorfields 24/7

**East:**

Royal London Hospital 24/7

**North East:**

Whipps Cross 24/7

Yours sincerely,

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