

Post-operative Cataract Service

Service Guide for Practices and Practitioners

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Primary Eyecare

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Introduction

NHS-funded community eye care services are locally commissioned and distinct from the standard General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) sight test. Delivered primarily by accredited optometrists, they offer specialised, accessible care in community optometry settings, reducing pressure on hospitals and improving patient outcomes. Primary Eyecare Services are a not-for-profit provider that work in partnership with Local Optical Committees (LOCs) and community optometry practices to deliver these high-quality services.

This guide is intended for:

- optometrists delivering the service
- support and administrative teams supporting the delivery of the service
- practice managers and owners responsible for service compliance and oversight

Overview

The Post-operative Cataract Service enables patients to receive their post-operative assessment at a community optometry practice following cataract surgery.

The Post-operative Cataract Service will:

- Enhance the patient experience by:
  - minimising unnecessary hospital visits
  - supporting care delivery closer to home
  - facilitating early identification and management of post-operative complications

- Improve the quality and efficiency of the cataract surgery pathway by:
  - reducing avoidable secondary care appointments
  - providing comprehensive post-operative outcome data to contribute to the National Ophthalmology Database (NOD) Audit

Terminology

The Post-operative Cataract Service has historically been known as, and these may still be the service names in some areas:

- Post-cataract service
- Post-op service
- Post-operative service
- POCS

Local Variations & Local Service Summary One-Pagers

This practice guide outlines the standard and/or most common pathway for this service.

However, local variations in access, service delivery, pathways and protocols may apply. It is important to use this guide alongside the local service summary one-pagers, available here.

Please speak to your Primary Eyecare Services Clinical Lead or email hello@referral.support for further information about your local service.

Variations in the Post-operative Cataract Service pathway may include:

- patient entry to the service (electronic vs paper transfer from surgical site)
- geographical inclusion criteria (can be based on Integrated Care Board or Trust)
- timeframe for post-operative assessment
- referral guidance for second eye surgery or post-operative complications
- inclusion of mandatory dilation

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- Patients registered with a GP in an Integrated Care Board that commissions a Post-operative Cataract Service, and/or treated by a provider included in a commissioned Post-operative Cataract Service.
- Patients aged 19 years of age or over.
- Patients transferred to Post-operative Cataract Service following uncomplicated surgery (unless under treatment for complications).

Exclusion Criteria

- Patients not registered with a GP in an Integrated Care Board that commissions a Post-operative Cataract Service, and/or treated by a provider included in a commissioned Post-operative Cataract Service.
- Patient under 19 years of age.
- Patients who have undergone complex cataract surgery and are deemed unsuitable by the surgical provider for post-operative assessment in community.
- Patients who, after being transferred to a community optometry practice, have returned to the surgical provider and remain under their care due to complications following surgery.

Domiciliary Patients

Please refer to local service summary one-pagers to confirm whether domiciliary service provision is specifically excluded.

- 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.
- The equipment requirements for domiciliary provision remain as stated in the equipment list below.
- Further information on delivering domiciliary services can be found here: Domiciliary Details

Entry to the Service

Self-Presentation

- Patients cannot self-present to this service.

Transfer by Surgical Provider

- Surgical provider transfers patient to their chosen accredited community optometry practice through the Primary Eyecare Services IT platform.
- Transferred patients will appear in the practice dashboard of the IT platform with a yellow tab “booking required”.
- The practice dashboard should be checked daily for actions required.
- **If a patient has not been transferred to the practice, they must not be manually added as this could lead to a data breach.**
- If a patient contacts the practice for a post-operative appointment and has not been transferred, contact the surgical provider to confirm whether a transfer is required.

N.B The Post-operative Cataract Service must be selected within the practice profile in order for surgical providers to transfer patients to the practice.

Signposted from Surgical Provider (only where commissioned)

- Surgical provider directs patient to contact their chosen practice from a list of accredited providers.
- Chosen practice adds patient to Primary Eyecare Services IT platform and proceeds with pathway.
- The facility for optometry practice to add patient to IT platform is only available where it is the local pathway.
- This pathway must not be used for areas where this is not the commissioned pathway as this could lead to a data breach.

Inter-Practice Referral

- Following transfer from a surgical provider via the IT module, a practice transfers the patient to another accredited community optometry practice.
- This should only occur after confirming with the receiving practice that they are able to accept the transfer.

Service Delivery

- Following cataract surgery, the surgical provider will transfer the patient to their community optometry practice of choice through the IT platform or signpost patient to community optometry practice.
- Transferred patients will be visible on the practice dashboard.
- The surgical provider will provide appropriate instructions and medication to the patient.
- If the patient experiences a red or painful eye prior to attending their post-operative assessment, they are instructed to seek advice immediately from the surgical provider.

Acceptance of Patient & Booking

Practices should review the transfer within 48 hours and either:

- accept the transfer and book an appointment
    - contact the patient within 48 hours of receiving the transfer to book their post-operative assessment
    - The patient should attend their chosen accredited community optometry practice for post-operative assessment 4-6 weeks after surgery
- reject to the transfer organisation
    - assessment no longer needed
    - insufficient information
    - unable to contact, FTE (Fail to Engage)
- refer patient to another practice (see Inter-Practice Referral above)

Where the transfer is rejected back to the surgical provider, the reasons must be clearly recorded and the Failed to Engage or Did Not Attend policies followed (see below).

Post-Operative Assessment

The post-operative assessment will include:

- assessment of aided and unaided visual acuity and post-operative refraction
- assessment of intra-ocular pressures
- clinical assessment of anterior and posterior eye. Dilation is generally not mandated but should be carried out where clinically indicated
- record of patient's satisfaction with vision and surgical outcome

Post-Operative Cataract Service and GOS Sight Tests

- A post-operative cataract assessment is a distinct clinical consultation and not the same as a sight test.
- It may be conducted alongside a GOS or private sight test if clinically appropriate and with the patient's consent.
- Patients should be informed of the difference between the two consultations, and duplicate testing is not necessary.
- If applicable, a GOS fee can be claimed, and additional tests may be performed at the optometrist's discretion.
- If a patient wishes to have their sight test elsewhere, only the post-operative assessment should be completed, and no spectacle prescription should be issued.

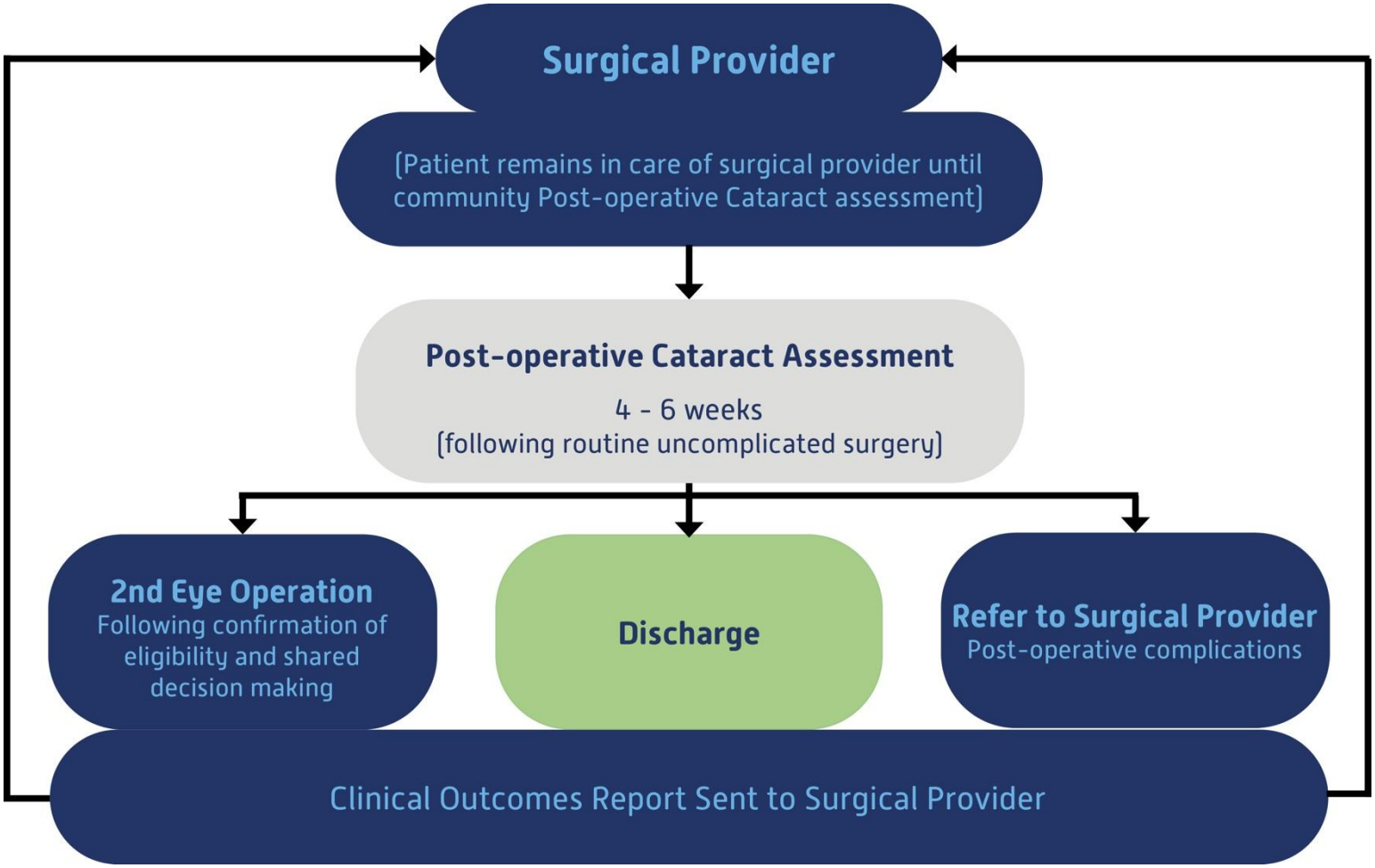
Service Outcomes

Following completion of the service pathway, outcomes are as follows:

- discharge the patient and advise on the interval before next routine sight test
- refer as appropriate
    - if there any signs of post-operative complications the optometrist will refer to the surgical provider with the appropriate urgency
        - the surgical provider who carried out the surgery should always be contacted in the first instance
        - please see local guidance for urgent/emergency pathway information
    - for second eye surgery if meets local ICB referral policy and patient wishes to be referred
    - for YAG capsulotomy
    - referral for co-existing eye disease as appropriate and if not previously arranged.

The patient should be informed of the outcome and expected next steps and offered sources on further information and support (see Additional Resources) in line with Eye care support pathway principles.

Service Pathway Diagram



Failed to Engage, Did Not Attend, and Was Not Brought Policies

Provision of community eye care services requires practices to manage and record all instances of patient non-engagement or non-attendance to appointments.

For information about Primary Eyecare Services Failed to Engage (FTE), Did Not Attend (DNA) and Was Not Brought (WNB) Policies, please click here.

Patient Feedback and Equality and Diversity Monitoring

- Patient feedback is crucial for our community eye care services to demonstrate the value of services and to enable service improvements.
- Please encourage all patients to complete patient feedback.
- Equality and Diversity information is also requested.
- Feedback is usually collected via text or email and comprises of a few short questions.
- If a patient can't complete patient feedback through SMS or email, you can support them in completing this: Completing PROMS where a patient has asked for support.

Completing an episode through the IT platform

All clinical episodes must be recorded on the Primary Eyecare Service IT platform within 48 hours.

Please note that the service needs to be selected in the Practice Profile in order to complete an episode through the IT platform. My Services - checking, adding and removing services

Please use the following link for a step-by-step guide to completing an episode through the IT platform. This guide can be saved as a PDF and/or printed as required.

The Primary Eyecare Services IT platform requires the recording of data appropriate for service delivery. This does not replace the need to keep a full record of the clinical episode on the Practice Management System (PMS).

Completing the Post-operative Cataract Service module for Primary Care

System Integrations

The Primary Eyecare Services IT platform integrates with various electronic patient record systems used by some hospital ophthalmology departments for example OpenEyes, Medisight, CHEC. Where these integrations are in place, clinical episode data is submitted automatically to the hospital system once the episode is completed on the IT platform. Practitioners do not need to submit data to any additional external platforms.

If a referral is required, please complete the red tab to ensure the referral is processed. The associated data will be submitted to the hospital system in the background.

These integrations are only available with hospitals that have the integration turned on. This is background functionality and does not impact the flow of completing the clinical episode on the IT platform; the practitioner workflow remains unchanged.

Audit and Quality Assurance

Primary Eyecare Services has a comprehensive programme of audit and quality assurance in place to ensure that all services are delivered in accordance with national and local standards.

Clinical leads undertake structured service level audits every quarter to monitor performance at a practitioner and practice level to ensure compliance with agreed protocols. Audit reports review activity levels, appointment types, referral patterns, access timeframes, clinical outcomes, and patient-reported feedback (PROMS/PREMS).

Where audit findings highlight outliers or concerns, clinical leads will work with practices and practitioners to identify the cause and to agree any indicated action plan.

Practices have access to their own service data via the Practice Audit Dashboard, enabling practices to monitor their performance benchmarked against national data.

Subcontractor Performance Management

Primary Eyecare Services monitors the performance of subcontracted community optometry practices through regular audits and a structured breach process. This supports service quality, patient safety, and contractual compliance. Further details are available here, or in the Primary Eyecare Services Policy Pack.

Requirements for Providing Service

Please find below the equipment and accreditation required for community optometry practice and practitioners to provide community eye care services and access the Primary Eyecare Services IT platform. These requirements should be read alongside the Primary Eyecare Services Policy Pack.

Equipment

All practices providing the service are required to have the following equipment available:

- access to the internet
- means of indirect ophthalmoscopy (Volk/headset indirect ophthalmoscope)
- slit lamp
- applanation tonometer
- distance test chart (Snellen/LogMAR) / Near test chart
- appropriate ophthalmic drugs (Mydriatic/Anaesthetic/Staining agents)

Clinical Accreditation

Optometrists

All participating practitioners will have the core competencies as defined by the General Optical Council (GOC).

Participating practitioners are expected to keep their knowledge and skills up to date which may include:

- including the provision of community eye care services in GOC personal development plans
- this may be supported Primary Eyecare Services Professional Development webpage

Participating practitioners must complete the WOPEC/LOCSU Cataract Distance Learning modules (there may be some local additional accreditation requirements in some areas).

A code to allow optometrists to complete the WOPEC accreditation can be provided by your Local Optical Committee.

Pre-Registration Optometrists (pre-regs)

As part of the Scheme for Registration, Pre-registration Optometrists (pre-regs) are required to see at least five 'other' patients, with one of the eligible services being the Post-operative Cataract Service.

Pre-regs can conduct the patient consultation with appropriate supervision, complete the clinical record on their practice patient management system (PMS), and document findings and clinical decisions made.

The supervisor must physically examine the patient following the pre-reg's assessment, signing off the consultation on the Primary Eyecare Service IT system with notes on the patient record. The supervisor will then complete the final clinical assessment on the Primary Eyecare Service IT Platform. Supervisors maintain full clinical responsibility for patient care.

Practice Requirements

All practices providing the service are expected to have at least one accredited practitioner regularly available to provide the service.

Full practice requirements and onboarding guidance can be found here:

Practice Onboarding

Practitioner Requirements

Full practitioner requirements and onboarding guidance can be found here:
Practitioner Onboarding

Practice and practitioner compliance and practitioner accreditation requirements are continuous and ongoing; should the practice or practitioner no longer satisfy these requirements then they must inform Primary Eyecare Services at hello@referral.support and cease providing this service. Guidance on this process is available on the Service Withdrawal help page.

Failsafe

Effective management of patients transferred for post-operative care is essential. It is crucial that all necessary actions are completed to ensure continuity of care and compliance with clinical governance standards.

The Primary Eyecare Services Failsafe Team will contact practices by email with details of patients whose post-operative care is overdue. This information will be categorised as follows:

1. Ready for booking: Patients who are awaiting appointment booking for assessment.
2. Booked not assessed: Patients who have been scheduled for post-operative care that have not yet been completed or recorded appropriately at the time of assessment.
3. Transferred from an alternative provider: Patients referred to your practice from another post-operative providing practice.

Failsafe Team emails will include the reference numbers for all overdue patients and will be accompanied by guidance outlining the necessary follow up actions required.

To ensure the Failsafe Team communications are received, it is essential to keep all contact information up to date. This includes ensuring that designated staff members responsible for post-operative care are correctly listed and able to receive correspondence.

Community optometry practices are expected to respond to emails from the Failsafe Team, providing explanation for any delays in updating patient episodes within the required timeframe.

Additional Information

Payment Process

For information about invoicing and how to track payments click here. Queries should be directed to hello@referral.support or via the 'blue bubble'.

Service Issues and Complaints

Primary Eyecare Services have a dedicated Quality Team who manage service issues and complaints.

To raise any concerns about this service, please contact quality@primaryeyecare.co.uk

Updating Practice & Practitioner Information

Please refer to the dedicated help page for information on practice and practitioner profiles, updating information and making annual declarations:

Practice and practitioner profiles - IT Platform

Supporting Materials

- Eye care support pathway
- Eye Conditions - Primary Eyecare Services
- Cataracts - lookafteryoureyes.orgLook After Your Eyes
- Cataract what you need to know from eyecareFAQ
- Cataracts - Eye health advice

Support Pages

- Primary Eyecare Services Policy Pack
- Cataract Help Guides:
    - Cataract Services Help Pages
    - Completing the Post-operative Cataract Service module for Primary Care
    - Post-operative Cataract Service Local Service Summary One-Pager Variations

- ICB Cataract Policies

- Support Pages:
  - My Services - checking, adding and removing services
  - Practice Onboarding
  - Practitioner Onboarding
  - Practice and practitioner profiles - IT Platform
  - Service Withdrawal
  - Changing Email Preferences - IT Platform
  - Practice Invoices and Reconciliation
  - Failed to Engage (FTE), Did Not Attend (DNA) & Was Not Brought (WNB) Policy
  - Domiciliary Details
  - Completing PROMS where a patient has asked for support
- Additional Links:
  - Primary Eyecare Services Professional Development
  - Wales Optometry Postgraduate Education Centre - WOPEC
  - Local Optical Committee

Further Information and Support

For further information, click here to view all our help guides.

Further queries should be directed to hello@referral.support or via the IT Platform ‘blue bubble’.