

A Single Point of Access (SPoA) in Primary Eye Care



Implementation of a SPoA in Greater Manchester, To Streamline the Established Glaucoma Enhanced Referral Service (GERS)

Description of Intervention

Glaucoma Enhanced Referral Service (GERS), a Glaucoma enhanced case-finding service¹ has been in place in Greater Manchester for many years. This has been shown to reduce referrals into ophthalmology by up to 50%. GERS is live in 8 out of 10 localities (May 2023), rolling out to the remaining localities in November 2023.

In a recent service innovation developed in collaboration with GM LOCs, Primary Eyecare Services have implemented a pilot SPoA to manage the flow of referral between the sight testing practice and the GERS practice.

Objective

To minimise admin burden on local practices and help them plan appointments, reduce DNAs and increase capacity to help meet demand.

Outcomes (Data From Primary Eyecare Services)

- During May-September 2023, through the 50 practices delivering GERS, there have been 1027 referrals into the service, from 236 referring practices
- Continued improvement on patient care with shorter waiting times, delivering care closer to home
- Releases capacity in HES for more complex conditions with a higher risk of sight loss
- Equity of service over the whole ICS

Benefits Realised Include

- Reduced admin for the referring practice and receiving practice
- Improved appointment planning
- Increased practice participation
- Reduction in DNAs

¹ gmlocs.co.uk/mst/extended-services-in-mst

² Further reading – 2023/24 priorities and operational planning guidance



Implementation of a SPoA in North Central London (NCL)

Description of Intervention

The NHS England 2023/24 priorities and operational planning guidance says, “by September 2023, systems are asked to put in place: direct referral pathways from community optometrist to ophthalmology services for all urgent and elective eye consultations.”²

In December 2022 NCL ran a successful pilot whereby 100 suspect wet AMD referrals from primary care optometrist were managed via a SPoA hosted by Moorfields Eye hospital (MEH) to NCL NHS hospital trusts, including MEH, The Royal Free hospital and North Middlesex hospital.

NCL ICB in collaboration with the LOC have now created SPoA hosted by MEH for all ophthalmology referrals from practices within NCL primary care. This pathway currently excludes suspected wet AMD and same day emergency referrals.

Outcomes (Data From NCL ICB)

SPoA went live in July 2023. In September 2023: there were 942 referrals through the SPoA, this is 74% of the total number of referrals in NCL. 67% of these came through nhs.net email accounts. The median time for the referrals to be processed was 3 hours.

Benefits

- Optometrist refer directly to secondary care bypassing the GP, resulting in a reduction in carbon footprint
- Reduction time from referral to triage
- Optometrist receives acknowledgment that referral has been accepted into secondary care
- Targeted educational CPD events
- Collaborative working between primary and secondary care
- Improved bidirectional communication allowing feedback from secondary care
- Increased the number of Optometrists with nhs.net to ensure encrypted, safe communication between primary and secondary care. (Data from NCL ICB) 67% of referrals in September 2023 were through nhs.net

