

Greater Manchester Hypertension Case Finding in Optometry Pilot

Greater Manchester (GM) integrated optometry into its health system through the Optometry Provider Board, enabling strong collaboration for a cardiovascular disease (CVD) pilot.

The initiative aligned with the 2023 GM Primary Care Blueprint, which emphasised optometry's role in prevention and reaching underserved patients. Funding combined NHS England Phase 2 pilot support with local resources, allowing large-scale delivery.

Purpose

Embed blood pressure (BP) checks in optometry practices to expand preventative healthcare and support the NHS prevention agenda.

Key Achievements

89 optometry practices participated in the 10 month pilot.

Impact of BP Checks - Of 4,625 checks:

- 969 referred to GPs to be seen within 48hrs to two weeks
- 39 to NHS111
- Seven to A&E
- 51 with low BP
- Three irregular pulse

Service Delivery: BP checks were offered independently of eye tests and integrated flexibly into patient. People were not eligible if their last BP reading was within six months.

Role of IT System: The OPERA platform streamlined data collection, referrals, and invoicing. Its prior use across Greater Manchester ensured staff familiarity, enabling rapid integration of the new service.

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Tracking Diagnoses & Challenges:

Closing the Loop: Tracking Hypertension Diagnoses.

The CVD steering group aimed to determine whether patients referred to their GP following raised blood pressure readings were subsequently diagnosed with hypertension. Aiming to support the evaluation of the effectiveness and overall benefit of the service.

Manual checks via the GM Summary Care Record were used to confirm hypertension diagnoses post-referral. Of 1,018 referred patients, 749 were reviewed; 545 had usable data, with 96 confirmed CVD diagnoses (17.6%).

Challenges: The process was time-consuming, relied on accurate GP coding, and faced data gaps (204 cases unusable). Manual review highlighted limitations and resource intensity.

Workforce Experience:

- The Greater Manchester CVD pilot successfully embedded BP checks into optometry practices, broadening preventative healthcare access.
- Non-clinical optical staff played a key role, with 80% of BP checks performed by this wider workforce, demonstrating effective workforce utilisation.
- BP checks were flexibly integrated within the patient journey, maximising convenience and patient reach.
- Our primary care at scale lead provider, Primary Eyecare Services, enabled engagement with primary care optometry practices, smooth operations, streamlining data, referrals (utilising bespoke digital solution), and payments to enhance collaboration across primary care.
- Patient feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with over 90% rating the service highly, highlighting trust, satisfaction, and the value of early intervention in community settings.

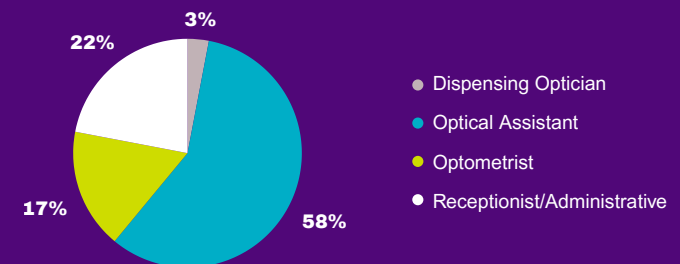
Patient Experience

- Overwhelmingly positive feedback: convenience, professionalism, reassurance and an excellent enhancement to routine eye care.
- Patients valued clear explanations and prompt addressing of health concerns.
- Patients consistently often described recommending it to others and noting the value of early health interventions provided in a familiar setting.

Conclusion

- The pilot demonstrates how optometry can contribute to preventative health, improve hypertension detection, reduce inequalities, and strengthen primary care.
- Scaling such initiatives could benefit the wider UK healthcare system.
- To improve feedback efficiency and accuracy, implementing an automated data solution is essential. Such a system would streamline ongoing monitoring of hypertension diagnoses and reduce the risks associated with manual processes, although it should be noted this may not be required on an ongoing basis due to effective evaluation of the service through this pilot.

Who most commonly performed the BP check?



When was the BP check most commonly performed?

