

Eye Health Briefing Paper

Optometrists are found in the high street, supermarkets, and within the heart of local communities. Optometry provision is available seven days a week.

Due to the abolishment of the PCTs, all existing General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) contracts became the responsibility of NHS England Area Teams.

A GOS mandatory contract is for the provision of NHS eye sight tests from a fixed premise. A GOS additional contract is for the provision of domiciliary NHS eye sight tests in a patient's home, residential/care home and day centres.

Both GOS mandatory and additional contracts cover the provision of NHS eye sight tests, which includes sight correction and a detailed examination of the eye that can identify early signs of diseases such as high blood pressure and cancer.

Up to 800,000 people in Greater Manchester are at risk of eye sight loss, which could be prevented. Promotion of eye sight tests is an important prevention tool, it is recognised that patients eye health needs, do extend beyond the scope of the GOS contracts. CCGs can commission a service that transfers the treatment of acute conditions and/or the monitoring of stable eye conditions from secondary to primary care. They can also commission services which seek to minimise inappropriate referrals.

The table below shows optometry provision in the Bury area and at a Greater Manchester level:

Optometrists:	Bury	Greater Manchester
Mandatory Contracts (GOS)	18	297
Additional (including mandatory) Contracts	0	83
Additional Contracts	9	*30
Total:	27	410

*Greater Manchester additional contracts also include local area provision for domiciliary NHS eye sight tests.

In 2012/13 41,618 GOS sight tests were performed in Bury.

Ophthalmic Public Health

There is now an ophthalmic public health indicator in the public health outcomes framework.

According to the latest HSCIC Data as at March 2014

- 365 people were registered blind.
- 590 people are registered partially sighted.

The indicator as outlined on the Public Health England website shows that the current indicators (2012/13) are as follows:

- 4.12iv – Preventable sight loss – sight loss certifications - 80
- 4.12iii – Preventable sight loss – diabetic eye disease – 0
- 4.12ii – Preventable sight loss – Glaucoma – 9
- 4.12i - – Preventable sight loss – Age related macular degeneration – 25

All indicators appears to be 'similar' rating to the benchmark, although Greater Manchester Local Eye Health Network is exploring these metrics and their alignment as we believe there are discrepancies across GM between the registered figures with the local authority and those reported nationally to be reflected in the indicator. This may give the appearance of higher or lower than expected certifications.

Commissioning

Community optometrists are also able to provide a range of services which would fall under the commissioning responsibility of Public Health/Local Authorities, known as locally commissioned services.

These services support health improvements, reduce health inequalities and improve quality of life. Optometrists can help meet the current and future needs of the local population in several ways:

- By developing services for long term care of patients with eye sight loss, in particular the elderly. Implementing low vision services (including relevant aids), can help support good management of cases and reduce the dependency of social care intervention with this group of patient's
- The vision and falls links is very strong with a significant proportion of fall caused by poor vision and it is vital that vision checks area a part of the falls pathway and falls assessments. Community optometrists can support the falls agenda with the provision of these checks.
- By improving access to care and quality of care, by working collaboratively with Public Health England colleagues and reviewing pathways, with the potential to transfer secondary care based diabetic retinopathy screening services into primary care – improving access across a multitude of locations and uptake. Diabetic Retinopathy is a significant cause of visual impairment in England, with a rising number of diabetics, screening and treatment is an integral part of the eye health care provision.

Currently Bury CCG has commissioned the Minor Eye Conditions service from community optometrists and this is delivered from 10 practices across Bury. This services delivers a patient self-referral service for minor eye conditions ensuring urgent eye conditions are seen within 24hrs and non-urgent within at least 5 days if not sooner.

Community optometrists have joined with Pennine Acute Hospital FT to bid to deliver the Community Glaucoma service and Low Vision service as currently being procured by Bury CCG – this bid is also being supported by the Bury Society for the Blind.

Contact Details

If you require more information around community pharmacy and the contribution they can make, please do not hesitate to contact the Greater Manchester Area Team (Optometry and Pharmacy Team) via email AGM.optometry-pharmacy@nhs.net or telephone 0113 825 5162/5139/5270.