

Referring To Ophthalmic Emergency Triage Service

The Emergency Departments in both Scarborough and York receive a number of emergency eye referrals that would be better referred directly to ophthalmology as it is unlikely that the staff in A&E have the expertise or equipment to deal with eye emergencies that cannot be managed by primary care. Please consider referral to the CECS service (see separate document).

To avoid patients having a long and frustrating wait in A&E, this document provides a guide as to how to refer to the local hospital eye service directly if this is the best option.

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, and weekends 9am to 2pm

Main telephone number (may be shared with patients): 01904 726758

GP 'Hotline' with voicemail function (for GP use only): 01904 725332

1. In the first instance GPs should contact the Emergency Triage Nurse Practitioners on **01904 726758**. A trained nurse practitioner will take your call and give appropriate advice or an appointment. If they need to they can speak to an ophthalmologist for advice.

Safety-netting: If you are given an appointment for a patient and are concerned about what they should do if they have a deterioration before that date you should consider giving them the phone number above so that they can contact the appropriate eye department directly for advice or to expedite their visit.

2. The above telephone line can be very busy; if you do not need to speak directly to the triage nurse, GPs can leave referral requests on our GP only voicemail referral line. Please advise the patient that they will receive a call from the service within 3 hours, and provide them with the service telephone number **01904 726758** to call in the unlikely event that they have not received a call. The referral can then be left as a voicemail message as per the instructions below. **N.B. the voicemail service is only available during the times given above. If any voicemails are left outside of these hours, they will not be picked up until the following working day.**

- Call on GP 'hotline' number: **01904 725332**
- You will be asked to provide the following information on the answer-machine:
 - Your name and contact telephone number.
 - Name of GP practice
 - Patient details
 - NHS number read out twice
 - Contact number for patient read out twice
 - Brief details of eye condition, and reason for referral.

3. An Ophthalmic Nurse will contact your patient within 3 hours, to arrange an appointment if necessary.

Outside of the hours given above

York Hospital on 01904 631313 and ask for the on-call ophthalmologist. Please be prepared for some delay as this doctor may be seeing patients or may be driving between sites.

[Urgent ophthalmology email for York and Scarborough](#) under this hyperlink

This email can be used for urgent referrals where a same day appointment is not required but advice or an appointment is required within a week.

It allows the sharing of documents after a telephone referral, please state this in the email to avoid duplication.

It does not replace the RSS referral system that should be used for most referrals.

Email is checked at least once a day on **workdays only**. Please ensure emailed referrals include details as per telephone messages above. Any documents mentioned in the referral such as opticians' reports, visual fields etc. should be attached to the email.

Symptoms that should prompt the patient to seek emergency medical care, if need be via A&E.

These are likely conditions with a possible threat to life such as

- Acute onset of hemianopia (? stroke)
- Amaurosis fugax recurring more than once over 24 hours (imminent risk of stroke)
- Papilloedema with neurological symptoms or new severe headache and or vomiting
- Sudden onset of 3rd nerve palsy (less than a week) with pain
- Any acute onset cranial nerve palsy in a child

Please note the maxillary facial department run a [temporal artery biopsy service](#) for suspected GCA which should be used **unless the patient has new sudden onset visual problems.**

Ophthalmic Emergency Triage Nurse Practitioner Team
York Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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