

Eyecare electronic Referral System (EeRS) Newsletter - October 2024

On behalf of Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (CWICB), welcome to the first newsletter for Ophthalmology colleagues across the system.

The aim of the newsletter is to share the latest news and information about EeRS and the learning that is being gathered, across community, primary and secondary care. This will include providing information on system development and refinements, any changes to patient pathways, key achievements, updates from colleagues and patient feedback. Being the first issue, there is a lot of share with you which reflects the huge amount of work and progress that is underway across the system. We have included an update on the roll out of EeRS and OCS, emerging data and intelligence that is being gathered and sharing news, important updates and learning – we hope you find it useful.

We would like to encourage colleagues to share any comments and suggested areas you would like to see included in future editions, please do get in touch using the email address below.

EeRS Project Team – cwicb.electivecare@nhs.net

In May 2024, CWICB commenced the roll out of EeRS to a few community Optometry practices, piloting the system and the operational processes that had been developed. Within just a few weeks, a weekly roll out programme mobilised across the summer involving practices completing all the necessary steps to onboard and use EeRS to make referrals to secondary care. The engagement from the community practices has been amazing, thanks to you all as we now have:

83 practices onboard using EeRS - 90% of all practices!

In addition to planning the system roll out to the community, operational discussions were taking place with secondary care providers to review the integration of existing systems and patient referral pathways with EeRS. Secondary care have been critical partners in accommodating the changes to the referral pathways and ensuring patient clinics were readily available for patient referrals and bookings, as more practices came on board.

Alongside implementing EeRS, the ICB commissioned the Ophthalmology Coordination Service (OCS). This is a new service designed to support administratively triaging all incoming routine and urgent referrals via EeRS, providing patients with choice where they can access their treatment and care. Bookings are made using eRS versus being sent to the patient's GP, with the aim to reduce the administrative burden on GP Practices – a big change to the referral pathway. The provider mobilised the service within tight timeframes and has supported the project team throughout the roll out of the system.

In summary, significant changes for everyone involved in Ophthalmology! We would like to thank you all for your willingness to collaborate, the hard work and support from everyone involved – it has been a huge achievement across the system. Finally, special thanks go to the Local Optometry Committee (LOC) led by the Chair, a significant partner throughout the extensive programme of work implementing EeRS across Coventry and Warwickshire.

thank you!

NHS

**Coventry and
Warwickshire**



3rd in the Midlands region for total number of practices signed up and using EeRS

More than 7,000 patient referrals sent using EeRS (current)

3rd in the Midlands region for volume of total referrals sent using EeRS (to date)

CWICB was one of the last ICBs to roll out EeRS on 9th May 2024. The willingness from partners to support the roll out has led to Coventry and Warwickshire becoming one of the top 3 ICBs now operating EeRS as 'business as usual'

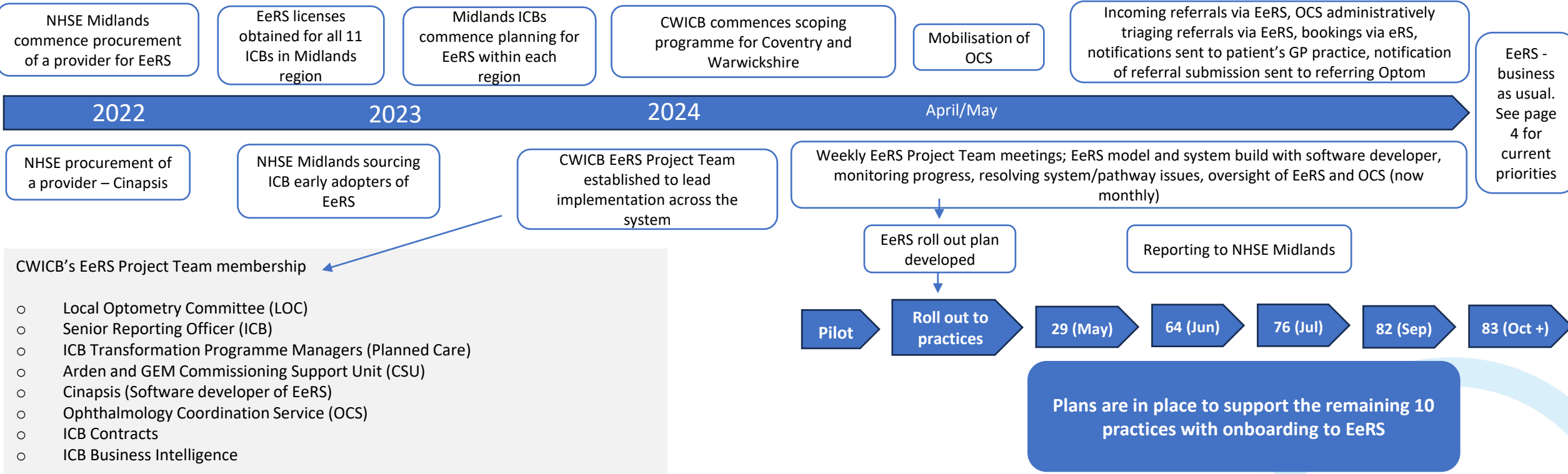


Timeline of EeRS roll out

EeRS was procured by Midlands NHSE for all 11 ICBs across the region, in response to workload and pathways challenges across Ophthalmology services. The system has been developed to support:

- consistency and quality in referral processes from community to secondary care
- reducing delays in referral processes for patients
- availability of eyecare data for services, to support defining future needs and commissioning requirements
- Ophthalmology has some of the highest number of outpatient appointments
- 2023/24 national planning guidance stated *“by September 2023, systems are asked to put in place direct referral pathways from community optometrists to ophthalmology services for all urgent and elective eye consultations.”*

The following key dates and events provide an overview of the implementation of EeRS both regionally and locally, to our current position in Coventry and Warwickshire.



Data and intelligence findings from EeRS and OCS

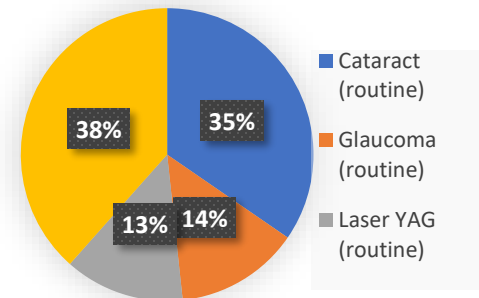
An ongoing review and analysis of the emerging data and intelligence, readily available through EeRS and the OCS, is a top priority for the ICB. Both systems now provide the ICB with 'real time' referral volume data by referral source, by area and by clinical condition type, supporting system wide planning to meet current and future demand in Ophthalmology.

Utilising EeRS data combined with intelligence captured by the OCS, has enabled the identification of opportunities to strengthen patient referral pathways, share learning across community, primary and secondary care and improve outcomes for patients accessing care in Coventry and Warwickshire. It is important that this data is shared with you, providing an insight into some of the early findings being gathered. We will continue to share this information through the newsletter, as the programme develops over the coming months.

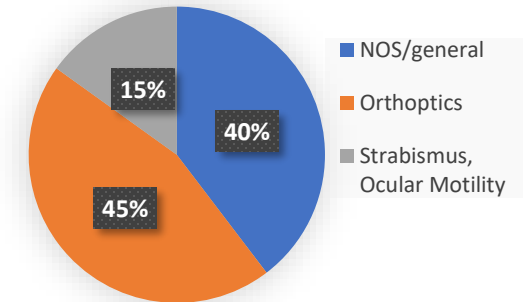
Headlines: early data analysis - up to end of September 2024

- > 6,800 routine and urgent cases have been sent from community on EeRS
- 361 Community Optometrists are referring using EeRS
- 8% of total cases referred have been rejected
- 99% of referrals were for adults, 1% for children and young people
- Urgent Wet AMD = 5% of total referrals submitted to secondary care providers
- 407 referral cases per week (averaged across 13-week period) via EeRS
- Referral rates remained steady during summer holiday period
- Patients being offered choice of secondary care providers by the OCS, using eRS
- Patients are selecting either NHSE or independent sector providers based on their personal preferences

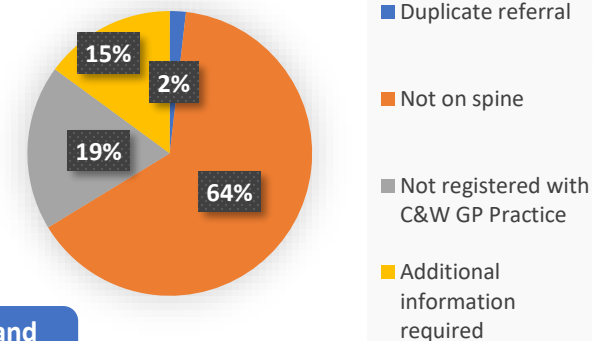
Adult – by referral category



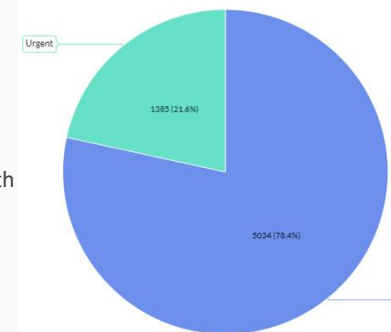
Children – by referral category



Rejected referrals - by reason



Volumes by routine/urgent



Opportunities have been identified to strengthen directory of services on eRS, ensuring accuracy of clinics, locations and wait times to aid patient choice

News, tips and system updates - Community Practices

Important

TIPS

Midlands EeRS Digital Forum

In addition to the regional roll out of EeRS across all ICBs, NHSE Midlands are progressing other Ophthalmology digital programmes of work.

This includes NHSE secondary care providers moving from Medisoft to mediSIGHT, a new electronic medical record platform which links to the National Ophthalmology Database.

We will provide an update for our area in the next newsletter.

Cataract

You may have noticed the Cataract referral form on EeRS has been updated, requiring practices to indicate whether the referral is for 1st or 2nd eye.

Please can you ensure this is completed, to support the wider system understanding of patient volumes.

Thank you.

Changes to Neuro ophthalmology referral pathway

- Please be aware changes have been made on EeRS, to the Neuro ophthalmology referral pathway.
- Coventry and Warwickshire do not have a Neuro Ophthalmology service; specialist service provision is out of area.
- For any patient with an urgent neuro ophthalmology referral and needs to be seen within one week, please refer to the Swift Queue. Information about the Swift Queue can be found [here](#) on the LOC website.
- For patients requiring a routine neuro ophthalmology referral, please refer using the General Ophthalmology patient pathway and complete the associated referral template.
- Please consider including the following information with your referral, to aid both the patient and clinical triage:
 - ✓ *patient symptoms*
 - ✓ *any completed visual field tests*
 - ✓ *fundus findings, ideally a picture or OCT*
 - ✓ *pupils and colour vision*

Attaching images on EeRS

Please use JPEG to save any images that you are attaching to the patient referral. JPEG preserves the quality of the image.

EeRS rejects images saved using Bitmap.

Rejected referrals & patient details

When the patient is with you in the practice - check the spine to make sure their details match; first name, surname, etc.

Patient details must match the spine, otherwise the referral will be rejected by the system and returned.

Did you know ...you can use the Cinapsis mobile app to take pictures?

You can also crop & markup images.

Any pictures taken on the mobile app are then instantly available on the Web app version as well.

This can be useful for sharing images of a patient's condition such as an unusual swelling around the eye, lumps and bumps, etc.

See the following short guide: <https://support.cinapsis.com/hc/en-gb/articles/8256888824465-Step-3-Take-a-patient-photo-using-the-Cinapsis-app-5-min>

Feedback from the system

Initial Feedback from Community Optometrists

As part of the EeRS roll out programme, we were keen to gather the views from Optometrists of the onboarding process, the information packs and the new referral system.

Comments captured in the early stages of roll out were used to update the information packs being sent to any new practices about to start the onboarding process.

Some of the key comments that were gathered included:

- *onboarding process was straight forward and the system easy to use*
- *referrals via EeRS are easy to make*
- *referral reports are useful*
- *a newsletter would be helpful*
- *in early stages, but it has the potential to be better for the patients and better than the previous system*

With 90% of practices now onboard, we would like to hear from you about the system and changes for both practices staff and patients in the referral process.

Your feedback is really important to identify where enhancements or further system developments can be made. Please look out for a survey in the next few weeks – thank you.

Secondary care providers

A survey has recently been sent to all secondary care Ophthalmology providers.

We would value understanding whether you feel EeRS and the OCS is supporting:

- ✓ more timely patient referrals being sent to secondary care
- ✓ consistency in the referral process
- ✓ improved quality in the referrals being sent to secondary care

Please add any other comments about the change in the referral pathway process, supporting the ongoing system development.

Please click [here](#) to access the online survey – thank you!

'Transition to EeRS and OCS has been fairly smooth'

Secondary care provider

GP practices

The EeRS Project Team would like to ask GP colleagues for their views of EeRS; benefits and opportunities for development. We will be in touch in the next few weeks.

Patient feedback

The OCS encourage patients to complete a questionnaire capturing their experience of the OCS referral process, as part quality assurance measures.

Findings from the survey results indicate:

- *99% of patients reported 'feeling informed of the different providers available for their referred condition via EeRS are easy to make'*
- *97% of patients reported that they were offered a choice of different providers, for their required care and treatment*
- *97% of patients rated the OCS service excellent or very good*

Patient comments

- *"Checked all the availability for referral time scales which enabled me to easily choose"*
- *"Great customer experience and fast turnaround"*
- *"Thrilled with the service received from the Optician and being contacted, very professional and prompt"*
- *"Was contacted twice as I couldn't pick up the call the first time, very approachable and tried to find a quick solution"*
- *"Really pleased with the way my referral was handled"*

Ophthalmology Coordination Service (OCS)

To further strengthen and support the newly implemented patient referral process via EeRS, CWICB commissioned a single point of access service – the OCS. The aims of the OCS are to:

- provide a single point of access for all incoming referrals from EeRS
- administratively triage all referrals from community Optometrists
- contact all patients to offer patient choice providing information where they can access their secondary care, based on the patient referral pathway and referral form from the Optometrists on EeRS
- from the patient’s preferred choice, make the onward referral to the selected secondary care provider using eRS (a directory of services of providers and electronic referral system)
- provide ‘real time’ patient choice data intelligence to CWICB

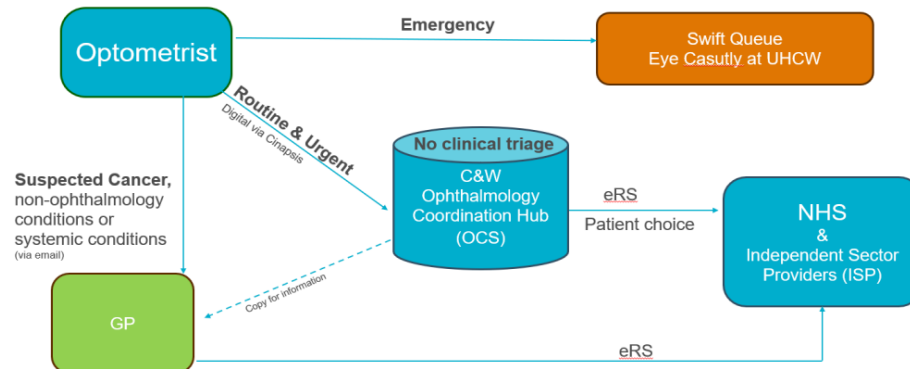
The combination of community Optometrists using EeRS to make referrals, EeRS providing a consistent referral process for secondary care and the OCS administratively triaging and offering patient choice, early intelligence findings are indicating positive outcomes for our patients. We will provide more information on the work of the OCS in the next issue of the newsletter.

Next Steps and priorities for the EeRs Project Team

As part of the ongoing development of the patient referral pathway, areas of focus for the project team over the coming weeks include:

- refine existing pathways for rejected referrals, to reduce administrative burden and duplication between primary and secondary care – share with colleagues once updated
- ongoing analysis of data intelligence across Ophthalmology
- newsletter - end of November

Coventry and Warwickshire eye referral pathway:



Please use the link to contact the Elective Care Inbox if you need any support or have any issues cwicb.electivecare@nhs.net

