

Sent via email

NHS England (London)  
Wellington House  
133-135 Waterloo Road  
London, SE1 8UG

8th March 2023

To: All optometrists working in NHS England (London) region.

Please ensure this letter is circulated to locum optometrists and the practice team.

Dear Colleagues,

### **Eye emergency arrangements during the junior doctors action**

On 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023, junior doctors are holding a 72 hour walk out. To maintain safe ophthalmology services, all eye emergency units will be consultant-led during the 72-hour period.

Appropriate eye emergency and urgent referrals should continue as usual; however, it is necessary for the referring optometrist to first contact the ophthalmologist to discuss the referral (telephone, or by dedicated email if available). Eye emergency units will be managing emergency presentations by remote consultation in the first instance, thereby, avoiding the need for some patients to attend in person. During the strike action and for several days afterwards, please consider deferring but only if clinically appropriate.

Suspect wet AMD referrals should continue to be made using NHS email, but wet AMD referral via eye emergency or rapid access units must be telephoned first.

It is therefore important to follow the College of Optometrists guidance on referrals and include all relevant details so that the receiving ophthalmologist can determine the need and urgency of the referral: <https://guidance.college-optometrists.org/guidance-contents/communication-partnership-and-teamwork-domain/working-with-colleagues/referrals/>

Please familiarise yourselves with your local trust requirements so that you can manage your patients appropriately.

### **In Hours Emergencies (hours may vary).**




Call your local and nearest eye unit to discuss the referral before sending the patient, as units will triage before accepting the referral.

Referral should be made to the local eye emergency unit, and not by default to Moorfields City Road.

### **Out of Hours (OoH) Emergencies (hours may vary)**

Use existing practice information/ protocols for your closest eye unit providing OoH.

If information is not readily available in the practice, use eye casualty referral map <http://bit.ly/EyeCas> to locate your nearest and most appropriate eye unit, and details of how to contact them according to their published eye unit guidelines. The bit-ly map also provides site information on eye emergency access for neighbouring systems outside London.

-  24-hour eye casualty or in hours / on call cover out of hours
-  In hours only (no service on site out of hours)
-  No eye casualty or rapid access clinic

Thank you for your co-operation.



Miss Dilani Siriwardena  
NHS London Clinical Director for Ophthalmology



Dr David Parkins  
London Eye Health Network Chair