

## **Eye Care Liaison Officer (ECLO) Service**

Eye Care Liaison Officers (ECLOs) are key in helping eye clinic patients and their families understand the impact of their diagnosis and providing them with emotional and practical support for their next steps.

### **What is an ECLO and what do they do?**

ECLOs work closely with medical and nursing staff in the eye clinic, and the sensory team in social services. They provide those recently diagnosed with an eye condition with the practical and emotional support which they need to understand their diagnosis, deal with their sight loss and maintain their independence.

ECLOs act as an important bridge between health and social services and are central to the support and wellbeing of patients in eye clinics. They also help prevent avoidable sight loss, by talking through treatment and helping people to understand their medication if necessary. They have the time to dedicate to patients following consultation, so that they can discuss the impact the condition may have on their life.

ECLOs are endorsed by the UK Ophthalmology Alliance (UKOA), the Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth), NICE and the Department of Health and Social Care. A qualified ECLO will attend the Eye Clinic Support Studies Course (delivered by RNIB and City University, London), which is a recognised qualification by the UKOA, and adhere to the RNIB Quality Framework for ECLO Services.

### **What support do ECLOs offer patients?**

ECLOs are there to provide up-to-date information and put patients in touch with useful services by making referrals on their behalf. They can advise on:

- eye conditions
- welfare benefits patients may be entitled to
- remaining in employment or re-training
- mental health and emotional wellbeing
- children's services and where to get help with difficulties at school
- voluntary organisations and local support groups

ECLOs are also able to explain the process for accessing a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) and the benefits of certification. The Royal College of Ophthalmologists considers ECLOs to be a core patient service within ophthalmology, and where in place, have a dramatic impact on patients' quality of life.

**Watch our Film about what ECLOs do:**

[https://youtu.be/0\\_BdpchU5FQ](https://youtu.be/0_BdpchU5FQ)

## **Who are the ECLOs in Northern Ireland\*?**

1. Belfast Trust  
Adrienne Hull (BHSCT)  
Diane Hudson (BHSCT)  
Eimear Barbour-Mulholland (BHSCT)  
Lorraine McCadden (BHSCT)  
Maria Gonzalez (BHSCT)  
Sam Ruscica (BHSCT)
2. Western Trust  
Catriona Doherty (WHSCT)  
Conor McPhilemy (WHSCT)
3. Across Northern Ireland - Martin Branney

*\*information correct at April 2021*

## **Where does ECLO cover?**

All areas of Northern Ireland are covered, with ECLOs offering remote support and face to face support in Ophthalmology clinics including:

- **Belfast Area:** Macular Clinic (Mater), Shankill Glaucoma Clinic, Royal Victoria Hospital (Adult and Paediatric Ophthalmology)
- **Southern Area:** Banbridge Polyclinic and/or South Tyrone Hospital
- **South Eastern Area:** Downe Hospital
- **Northern Area:** Causeway Hospital, Braid Valley
- **Western Area:** Altnagelvin, Omagh, SWAH (Enniskillen)

## **Making a referral to ECLO service**

As an optometrist in primary care you can make a referral to the ECLO service using a direct ECLO referral form. This form is hosted on the BSO website with other ophthalmic referral forms. Please use the following link to generate the ECLO referral form:

[http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/Optomety\\_ECLO\\_Referral\\_form.pdf](http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/Optomety_ECLO_Referral_form.pdf)

These referral forms can be:

- emailed to: [ECLONI.Mailbox@rnib.org.uk](mailto:ECLONI.Mailbox@rnib.org.uk) - please email securely from your practice HSCNI email account.
- posted to: RNIB, Victoria House 15-17 Gloucester Street, Belfast BT1 4LS (currently closed due to Covid-19 pandemic).

Referral guidelines are available here: [ECLO Referral Guidelines A3 poster](#)

## **Useful Resources**

<b>RNIB</b>	<a href="https://www.rnib.org.uk/">https://www.rnib.org.uk/</a>
<b>Macular Society</b>	<a href="https://www.macularsociety.org/">https://www.macularsociety.org/</a>
<b>Albinism Fellowship</b>	<a href="https://www.albinism.org.uk/">https://www.albinism.org.uk/</a>
<b>Glaucoma UK</b>	<a href="https://glaucoma.uk/">https://glaucoma.uk/</a>
<b>Angel Eyes</b>	<a href="https://www.angeleyesni.org/">https://www.angeleyesni.org/</a>
<b>Royal Society for Blind Children</b>	<a href="https://www.rsbc.org.uk/">https://www.rsbc.org.uk/</a>
<b>Guide Dogs</b>	<a href="https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/">https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/</a>
<b>Retina UK</b>	<a href="https://retinauk.org.uk/">https://retinauk.org.uk/</a>

## **Information and guidance for eye clinic staff**

Information on Certificate of Visual Impairment, quality standards and guidance

[Information and guidance for eye clinic staff - RNIB - See differently](#)

## **Resource guides from RNIB**

Information to help people understand eye conditions and live well with sight loss.

[Resource guides from RNIB - RNIB - See differently](#)