

**To: All GP Practice Managers  
Belfast LCG Area**

1<sup>st</sup> June 2018

Dear Practice Manager,

**Northern Ireland Primary Eyecare Assessment and Referral Service  
NI PEARS**

This new service in the Belfast LCG area enables GPs and Community Pharmacists to refer patients presenting with new and acute (sudden or recent onset) eye problems to an accredited local optometrist for investigation and management.

The optometrist will offer the patient an appointment within 48 hours to investigate their eye problem and provide either management for the patient if the condition is minor and non-sight threatening e.g. conjunctivitis, dry eye; or if more serious and potentially sight threatening e.g. cornea infection, suspect retinal detachment; triage the patient for onward referral to the appropriate specialist ophthalmology service. Patients may also self-refer to the service.

The aim of the service is to provide a locally accessible first point of contact for patients presenting with a sudden or recent onset eye condition who may otherwise have attended their GP, hospital eye casualty or emergency department.

Please find enclosed:

- **Information sheet for practice staff** on patient inclusion, exclusion criteria, access to lists of participating optometrists etc.
- **Poster** to display in your surgery to inform patients of the service

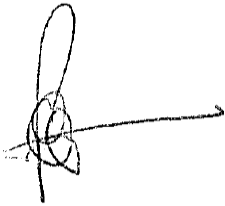
I would be grateful if you would share this information with all the GPs and other practice staff and display the poster in your waiting area.

This service is available to any patient from 5years old upwards who is registered with a GP i.e. has a Health & Care number, in Northern Ireland and has a new and acute (sudden) onset eye problem.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact any one of the optometric advisers listed below

Thank you for your support of this new service.

Yours sincerely



Raymond Curran  
Head of Ophthalmic Services  
Directorate of Integrated Care  
Health & Social Care Board

### **Optometric advisers**

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