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To: All GP practices

6<sup>th</sup> March 2012

Dear Colleague

### **New Ophthalmology Pathways for GOS 18s and new routine GP referrals**

At the CCG development event in January 2012, practices received a presentation outlining proposed new ophthalmology pathways. These would ensure that suitable patients were treated in a community setting under an accredited optometrist delivering the Community Eye Care Local Enhanced Service.

Optometrists have been demonstrated, in a pilot in Scarborough, to be a more cost effective way of managing patients with eye problems than either GOS 18s going to GP practices or GPs sending all routine new referrals directly to a Hospital Eye Service. In many cases local optometrists are able to review patients themselves. This means patients can be seen more locally and more conveniently, particularly since in many cases the services also operate at the weekend.

At the meeting there was general enthusiasm for the pathways and agreement that they should start in March. We are now happy to confirm that these pathways will go live from **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March** and we would be grateful if you could bring this to the attention of appropriate individuals within your practice.

More detailed information on the new pathways and where practices should now send referrals is attached (appendix 1), together with a summary flow-chart (appendix 2) and the list of the accredited optometrists for the HRW area, for information (appendix 3)

The service will be audited and reviewed after 6 months. If you have any questions about the pathways please contact Lisa Barker on the address above.

Yours sincerely

**Dr George Campbell**  
**HRW CCG**

**Lisa Barker**  
**Pathway Implementation & Choice Manager**

Cc. All partner acute Trusts – South Tees, County Durham & Darling, Scarborough & NE Yorkshire



**Pathway for GOS 18s**

**Any GOS 18 created by an optometrist within our area should be directed to one of the PCT's accredited optometrists to triage via the PCT Choice Office**

This should signal the end of GOS 18 forms coming to practices. Practices should forgive local opticians if a few still come through; just politely remind them they should now send them to the PCT Choice Office (and inform the CCG about any repeated problems).

An accredited optometrist will decide on the basis of the GOS 18 whether the patient should be managed by one of three routes:

1. To be reviewed by himself or herself – GPs will not be involved and therefore not informed of this, until a further decision is made, either to reassure or to refer to secondary care.
2. To be reassured and seen again routinely by their own optician
3. To be referred to secondary care using the same protocols that exist currently for direct referral to the Hospital Eye Service for Cataracts (i.e. practices are only asked for background information to accompany the referral, e.g. problem lists, medication and allergy / sensitivity lists)

**Pathway for new GP referrals that would have been sent to Ophthalmology**

From March 2012, **all new GP adult routine referrals** that would have been sent to Ophthalmology should be sent to the PCT Choice Office. This can be done using the safe haven fax 01423 859669 or via Choose and Book, under Ophthalmology, North Yorkshire LES Scheme.

The PCT choice office will forward the referrals to the local accredited optometrists to review the referral.

**Please send all urgent referrals to secondary care using established pathways.**

Patients should be advised by their GP that the referral will be reviewed by a specialist (accredited) optician who will decide within 2 working days whether the patient can be managed by one of two routes:

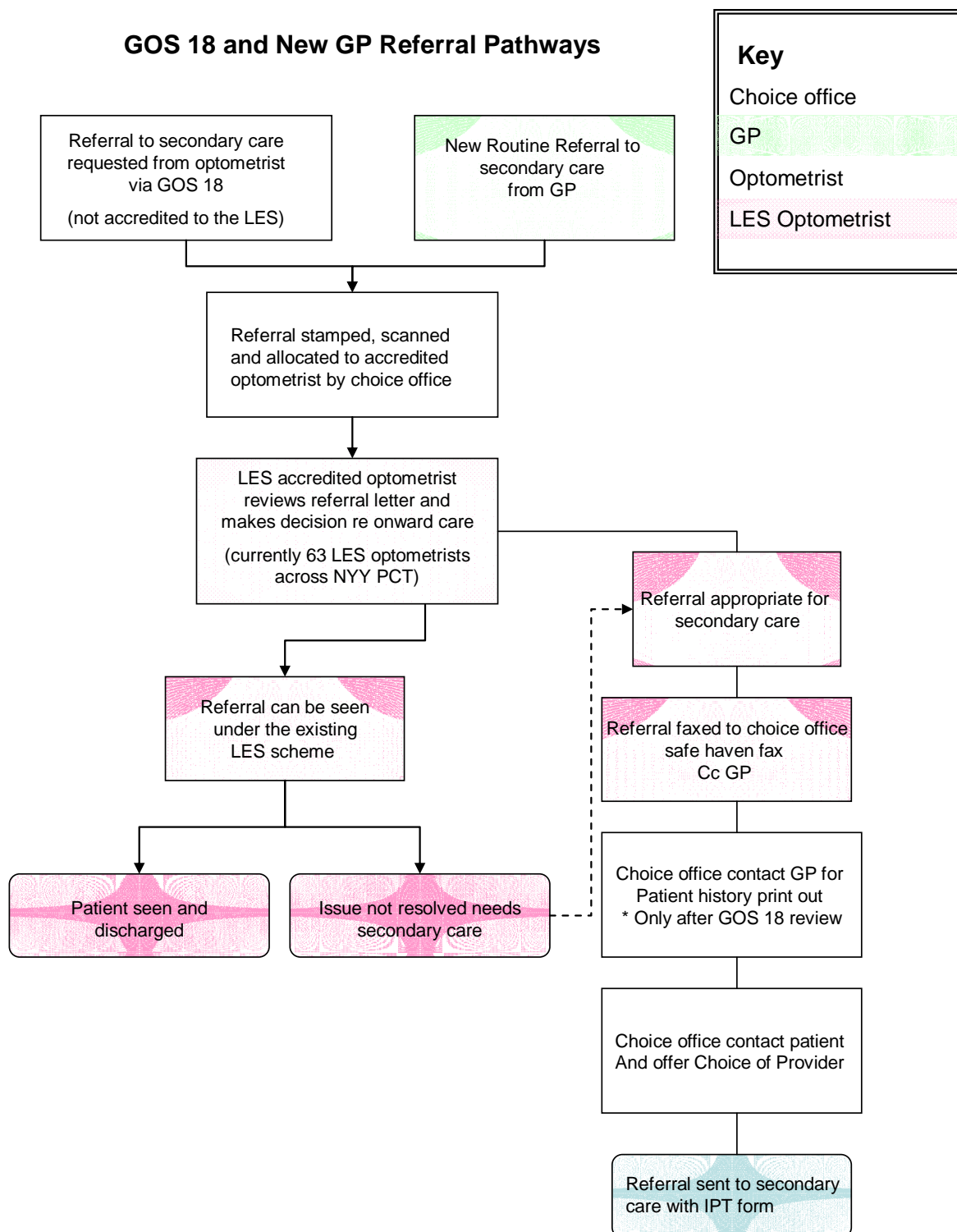
The local optometrist can decide to:

1. Recommend the patient is seen by secondary care using the GP's letter and with correspondence confirming this going to the GP.
2. Review the patient himself / herself. Following such a review patients may be:
  - a. Referred on to secondary care using the GP's letter and with correspondence confirming this going to the GP and the patient being offered full choice at this stage by the Choice office staff.
  - b. Followed up by the local accredited optometrist with correspondence going to the GP
  - c. Reassured and discharged back to the GP with correspondence going to the GP

## **Additional notes**

- All urgent referrals and referrals for children (< 18 years) should be sent directly to secondary care using established pathways
- The optometrists providing this service are the same ones as those currently working under the Enhanced Eye Service and Cataract Local Enhanced Services.
- Where the information on the referral form indicates a possible case for exceptionality, the Choice Office will forward the referral to the PCT's IFR panel for a commissioning decision to be agreed.
- This pathway will only achieve cost efficiency savings if all GP referrals go via the PCT choice office. We need your help to ensure the new pathways are fully implemented in your practice as soon as practicable.
- GP referrals will be rapidly reviewed by optometrists, so where they do need to be seen by secondary care the PCT's choice office will contact the patient to arrange an appointment and provide choice of provider.
- GPs do not have an obligation to provide choice for a community triage service. Following this pathway will not breach of GPs obligations to provide choice as this only applies to referrals directly to secondary care.

## GOS 18 and New GP Referral Pathways



## List of accredited optometrists in the HRW locality

OPTOMETRIST	ADDRESS	TOWN	POSTCODE
ECE Hall Opticians	Royal Oak	Thirsk	YO7 1HQ
Specsavers	2-4 Kings Street	Richmond	DL10 4HP
Cooper & Flower	35 High Street	Stokesley	TS9 5AD
Boots Opticians	203-204 High Street	Northallerton	DL7 8LW
Row Opticians	4 Millgate	Thirsk	YO7 1AN
Cooper & Leatherbarrow	15 Finkle Street	Richmond	DL10 4QA
Alexander Optometrists	152 High Street	Northallerton	DL7 8JX
Specsavers	120 High Street	Northallerton	DL7 8PQ
Paul Rutter	7 Southend	Bedale	DL8 2BJ
Andrew Orkney Opticians	1 High Street	Leyburn	DL8 5AQ
S&CL Wilkinson	10 King Street	Richmond	DL10 4HP
McBride Opticians	4 South Parade	Northallerton	DL7 8SE
Cooper and Flower	35-37 High Street	Stokesley	TS9 5AD
Kate Malyn	The Market Square	Easingwold	YO61 3AD
Rayner Opticians		Whitby	