

Objective

This briefing paper has been prepared for Darlington Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee on behalf of Sarah Burns, Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning for County Durham CCG and Durham County Council and Michael Houghton, Director of Commissioning and Transformation, NHS Tees Valley CCG.

Aim

The briefing paper aims to inform of NHS County Durham CCG and NHS Tees Valley CCG (Darlington locality) contract award to Primary Eye Care Services Ltd to provide a high quality Community Eye Care Service to deliver post-op cataract care in the community from autumn 2020.

Background and introduction

County Durham CCG and the former Darlington CCG have been working collaboratively with County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) for a number of years to reduce activity to their overstretched ophthalmology department, which attracts high numbers of review out-patient appointments.

Nationally, ophthalmology is recognised as a high volume specialty; hospital eye services are overstretched, due to a combination of an ageing population, new treatment availability and guidelines, and a shortage of sub-specialty Consultants.

Pathway change

The community eye service will improve the patient pathway for those patients receiving cataract surgery. Patients attending CDDFT for second eye cataract surgery will be assessed for suitability to have their post-op care delivered in the community during outpatient attendance, prior to surgery. Overtime, we expect this service to expand and include other regional hospital eye services.

The change to the pathway means

The services will be delivered from high street opticians, close to patients' homes and will reduce the reliance upon ambulance transport to travel to regional hospitals. Patients will receive their care and monitoring by qualified practitioners with necessary training, competence and experience as specified by NICE Guidelines.

The proposed change will support the NHS Long Term Plan (2019)¹ and relieve pressures on local hospital eye services, enabling the Ophthalmologist and the team to manage those patients with more complex conditions, efficiently and effectively.

Jackie Storey
NECS Commissioning Support Officer
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¹ NHS Long Term Plan
www.england.nhs.uk