

**MEMORANDUM TO NHS:  
PCA(O)(2016)5**

**NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE  
GENERAL OPHTHALMIC SERVICES**

**Feedback to Optometrists on Referrals**

1. This Memorandum requests that secondary care ophthalmology departments provide meaningful feedback to optometrists, copied to the patients GP, within two weeks of referral if, upon receipt of a referral, it is decided that a patient does not need to be seen in hospital.
2. It is also expected that meaningful feedback will be provided to optometrists, copied to the patients GP, if a patient is seen by the ophthalmology department. This feedback should ensure continuity of care and provide learning which is in the patient's best interests and will also allow optometrists to manage the patient's condition in a community setting if appropriate.
3. This is in line with an agreement between the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and the College of Optometrists in March 2015 and subsequent statement which was issued to their respective members. A link to this statement is provided below:  
  
<https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/2015/03/sharing-patient-information-between-healthcare-professionals-a-joint-statement-from-the-royal-college-of-ophthalmologists-and-college-of-optometrists/>
4. Having information on the outcome of a referral to hand when a patient returns to the optometrist's practice will allow for the continuation of care within the community, can prevent unnecessary referrals and encourages optometrists to manage more patients conditions in the community when appropriate and based on their experience. Copying in the patient's GP will ensure that the GP remains informed of the patient's condition.
5. In order to ensure that they receive this feedback optometrists are asked to include their contact details clearly on any referrals. Ophthalmology departments are also asked to ensure that they check that the optometrists contact details are included on the referral and, if not, take the appropriate steps to ensure that the optometrist receives feedback.
6. At present around 60% of optometry referrals are made through SciGateway which allows the optometrist to see if the referral has been received and opened by the ophthalmology department. Direct electronic feedback can be made on receipt of the referral using the HEAT status codes, allowing optometrists to be reassured that the referral has been received.
7. The Scottish Government remain committed to electronic communication between primary and secondary care and continue to work with stakeholders on processes to have all optometry referrals on SciGateway for a consistent referral and feedback system.

**Enquiries**

Any enquiries arising from this Memorandum should be taken up with your NHS Board.

Scottish Government Population Health Directorate  
15 June 2016