

Subject	The Referral of Visually Impaired People by Community Workers to The Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital (NNUH) Low Vision Clinic
Document type	Guidance
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Target Groups	Norfolk Sensory Support & Rehabilitation Workers Vision Norfolk Staff

Purpose

To ensure referrals to the NNUH Low Vision (LV) clinic happen via an appropriate route, without undue delay, whilst avoiding unnecessary ophthalmic investigations, but also minimising the risk of detriment through delayed identification of treatable ocular disease.

Exclusions

This guidance applies to cases where individuals suffer from a visual impairment of known cause. Where previously unrecognised visual impairment is suspected, the individual should be advised to consult their General Practitioner (GP) or Community Optometrist without delay for further assessment and possible further referral via the usual channels where indicated.

Acute reduction in vision

Where a client/patient reports one or both of the following:

- a) A rapid reduction in vision (duration up to 14 days), or
- b) Recent onset of visual distortion of straight lines (especially if reported spontaneously as opposed to in response to a specific question about distortion)

the community worker should seek ophthalmic assessment without delay. This would usually mean a GP referral to the Ophthalmic Emergency Referral Service (OERS), or a visit to a community optometrist.

Gradual reduction in vision (guidance by patient group)

Where the client/patient reports a more gradual reduction in vision (or a gradual increase in difficulty with visually related tasks), and is known to suffer from an untreatable eye problem:

Where the patient is STILL UNDER the care of an NNUH ophthalmic consultant:

The community worker should call the optometry department direct on **01603 288067** to request a LV appointment

Where the patient is NO LONGER under the care of an NNUH ophthalmic consultant:

The community worker should contact the GP to request a referral to the LV clinic

Where the patient has NEVER been under the care of an NNUH ophthalmic consultant:

The community worker should contact the GP to request a referral to the LV clinic

Where uncertainty exists as to whether a client/patient is still under the care of a NNUH ophthalmic consultant, the community worker can obtain clarification by calling the optometry department on 01603 288067.