

Our Ref: 67594

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## **Re: Freedom of Information Request**

Please find below the response to your recent Freedom of Information request regarding Referral Guidelines within NHS Southport and Formby CCG.

Request/[Response](#):

1. Please could you let me know whether you have changed the referral guidelines for a) orthopaedic procedures b) cataract procedures c) hernia procedures at any point since March 2020?

a) Orthopaedic procedures: No  
b) Cataract procedures: [Cataract Referral Criteria](#)  
c) Hernia procedures: No

2. If yes to question 1, please could you provide more details of the specific changes and if possible, attach the latest guidance

### **Cataract Referral Criteria: Guidance for first eye surgery**

In order to confirm eligibility for payment, providers should ensure all first eyes have a documented reference number from the Optometrist-led pre-cataract referral scheme. The presence of a cataract in itself does not indicate a need for surgery. It is intended that all patients should be fully assessed and counselled as to the risks and benefits of surgery. This assessment will usually be undertaken by an accredited community optometrist prior to referral.

Where both eyes are affected by cataract, the first eye referred for cataract surgery is usually expected to be the eye where cataract has caused the greatest reduction in visual acuity.

This policy does not extend to cataract removal incidental to the management of other eye conditions.

Referral of patients with cataracts to ophthalmologists should be based on the following indications:

1. The patient has sufficient cataract to account for visual symptoms.

It is strongly recommended that only those cases with best corrected visual acuity of 6/9 (Snellen) or +0.2 (Logmar) or worse in the poorer eye be referred. However, exception may be made where the impact of symptoms is such that the patient's quality of life is significantly impaired.

A description of this impact must be documented and accompany the referral information for all cases. Example of the impact on lifestyle would include any of the following factors, although this is not exhaustive:

- a. the patient is at significant risk of falls
- b. the impact of the visual symptoms is affecting the patient's ability to access their chosen mode of transport including driving
- c. the impact of symptoms is compromising the patient's independence
- d. the impact of the visual symptoms is affecting the patient's ability to continue their employment or undertake caring responsibilities
- e. the impact of the visual symptoms is substantially affecting the patient's ability to undertake daily activities such as reading, watching television, leaving the house or recognising faces.
- f. the patient is experiencing disabling glare.

AND

2. Where the referral has been initiated by an optometrist, there has been a discussion on the risks and benefits of cataract surgery based around the Patient Decision Aid For Cataract. <http://sdm.rightcare.nhs.uk/pda/cataracts/>
3. The patient has understood what a cataract surgical procedure involves and wishes to have surgery

#### Guidance for second eye surgery in patients with bilateral cataracts

In order to confirm eligibility for payment, providers should ensure all second eyes have a documented reference number from the Optometrist-led pre-cataract referral scheme.

Criteria is as for the first eye, i.e. the impact of visual symptoms is sufficiently impairing the patient's quality of life despite one eye having been operated upon.

#### Note main areas of change:

- 6.9 visual acuity for first and second eye (previously 6.12 for second eye)
- removal of the previously stated refractive difference of 2.5 dioptries

#### Approval:

- Revised Cataract Referral Criteria presented to Leadership Team 24.2.2021 and Clinical QIPP Advisory Group 02.03.2021. Final approval received 16.3.2021.

3. Please could you let me know if you have any plans to change the referral guidelines at any point over the next 12 months?

No

4. If yes to question 3, please provide further details.

N/A