



## **Bedfordshire and Luton - New Urgent Eye Care Service**

A new Urgent Eye Care Service (CUES) is now available in Bedfordshire and Luton.

If you have a new minor eye care problem that needs urgent or emergency care you can be assessed and treated by opticians as part of our Urgent Eye Care Service.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the availability of a number of routine health services. The NHS is keen to ensure urgent eye care is delivered safely in the community through remote triage and consultations (by telephone or video), to minimise face to face appointments and make use of technology to reduce patient-practitioner contact time. The Urgent Eye Care Service will reduce pressure on busy GP practices and hospital eye services / ophthalmology departments by making use of the network of local opticians in our area to treat urgent and emergency minor eye care problems.

### **What is an urgent minor eye care problem?**

Typical conditions that can be treated under the service include:

- A red or painful eye
- Removal of a foreign body
- Sudden loss or change in vision
- Flashes and floaters
- Dry eye or gritty and uncomfortable eyes
- Irritation and inflammation of the eye
- Significant sticky discharge from the eye or watery eye
- Ingrowing eyelashes.

The service **does not** cover long term conditions, sight tests or major eye conditions that are being regularly monitored by your optometrist or hospital eye service e.g. cataracts, diabetic retinopathy or glaucoma.

### **Who is this service for?**

All adults and children over the age of 2 registered with a local GP in the Bedfordshire or Luton areas can use the service for free. Children under 16 years must be accompanied at their appointment by an adult.

You can also use the service if you are not registered with a local GP but are resident and eligible for NHS care e.g. from the travelling community or homeless.

## **How do I access the service?**

Please contact the CUES Telephone Assessment Service which is open 7 days a week between 08.00 and 20.00, from Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

### **Call Free: 0800 316 9200**

You can call the Freephone number directly to discuss your condition or be referred/ redirected to the service by another health care provider e.g. GP, pharmacist, optician, care navigator, NHS 111, hospital eye service, A&E or MIU. Only telephone bookings can be accepted at this time.

## **What happens next?**

STEP 1: The call centre will register your details, check eligibility, screen for COVID-19 and promptly arrange a phone call with a qualified clinician e.g. an optometrist.

STEP 2: The clinician will assess your condition remotely by telephone or video consultation and provide advice on how to manage it and will enable access to topical medications and prescriptions where appropriate. He / she will confirm if a face to face consultation with an optometrist is required. If your condition is more serious, a referral to an ophthalmologist at the hospital eye service may be required.

STEP 3: If a face to face consultation is necessary your local optician will be contacted on your behalf to arrange a suitable appointment with you. During the face-to-face appointment, all PPE national guidance and social distancing rules will be observed.

Please note, people identified with COVID-19 symptoms, confirmed COVID-19 infection or who are in one of the at-risk groups will be managed by remote consultation or referral, and will not be offered a face to face consultation within the service, in line with the advice to stay at home and self-isolate.

The Bedfordshire & Luton Urgent Eyecare Service (CUES) is provided in partnership with Ocular Outcomes Ltd.