COVID-19 Urgent Eyecare Service

FAQs

Primary
Eyecare

CUES Urgent Eyecare Service – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between MECS and CUES?

CUES minimises patient contact by using telemedicine to manage suitable patient presentations. Those patients who's symptoms indicate further investigation continue to be seen face to face as in MECS. CUES also includes the use of OCT (and in some CCG area's IP) where clinically indicated and the ability to attach digital images and OCT scans to patient referrals.

How do I sign up to deliver CUES?

Practices in area's where CUES has been commissioned can complete the registration form below.

https://bit.ly/3e7lXI1

I have a domiciliary practice, can I deliver CUES?

Yes, as long as CUES has been commissioned in the CCG area you deliver services in. You will need to meet the same requirements in the pathway and protocol document i.e. equipment, access, etc.

How can I check if a patient is eligible for this service.

Once the patient has been added to the Opera system there is an eligibility check built in so that if you try to add a CUES episode for a non-eligible patient you get a warning and advise to direct the patient to NHS111 for further information.

Where can I find further information about the service?

Primary Eyecare Services has developed a pathway and protocol document for optical practices to use. This includes lots of useful information including;

- Service Description
- Patient Outcomes
- Supply of Therapy
- Record Keeping
- Patient Information
- Service requirements (including equipment)
- Risk Stratification
- CUES Eligibility Screening / Triage Form
- Contact Lens Opticians (CLO)

Primary Eyecare Services regularly update the COVID page on their website, here you can find information on;

- Telemedicine
- Virtual Conferencing Platform
- COVID Screening in CUES
- PPE
- Hand Hygiene

Do I need to deliver patients assessment within 2 hours?

All practices should aim to ideally deliver a telemedicine assessment within 2 hours of initial contact but must carry this out within 4 hours of initial contact.

Do I need an nhs.net address to provide the service?

No, we would recommend obtaining an nhs.net account as this will allow you to access Accu Rx telemedicine software and support general communications. You can register for an nhs.net email address by following recent guidance issued by NHS England.

I have not provided telemedicine before, do I need special software?

There are various telemedicine platforms that can be used, Primary Eyecare Services has developed a useful guide on one of the available systems, this is called Accu Rx. Primary Eyecare services have produced a useful guides on telemedicine and virtual conference / platforms to support clinicians. These are available on https://primaryeyecare.co.uk/covid-19/

What do I do if the patient's symptoms do not make them eligible for CUES assessment?

There are some presentations which can be managed through self-care and deflecting a patient to a local pharmacy. Patients should be advised to return if symptoms change, increase or has not resolved within 5 days. Patients details should be entered on to the IT platform as this forms part of the patient's clinical record.

This service uses a different IT system, how will I receive access to this?

The CUES service is delivered via the Opera platform, this is used for onboarding of the practice, the practitioners and invoicing, as well as the clinical data capture. During the onboarding process the practice will submit compliance documentation and be approved, the next stage is for the practice to submit practitioner compliance documentation, once approved the practitioner will be sent log in details to opera to the email address that was provided at the practitioner sign up stage (always check junk folder if you haven't received after a few days).

Do we have a single practice log in to OPERA?

No, PES Opera is individual user based access, so each individual has their own log in details. There is role based user types dependent on whether you are an optometrist or MECS accredited contact lens optician and therefore need access to be able to complete the whole clinical record or whether you are a non-clinician in the service but need to complete patient input and screening information.

Have you developed any training on the new OPERA IT system?

This will be included in your local mobilisation event, the OPERA platform also includes useful how to videos and a help bubble which will allow you to ask further questions.

On your website, there is a find a practice page, will my practice appear in the search?
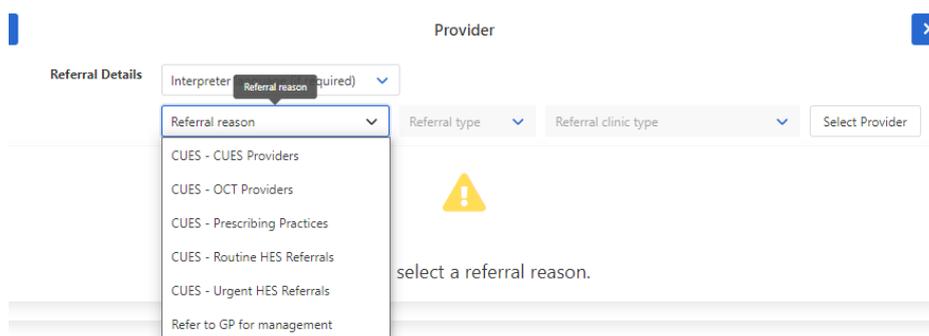
Yes, this section includes CUES practices. This has been developed to allow easy access to CUES practices for patients, GP's, hospitals and other healthcare professionals to signpost patients into the service

Do patient referrals go directly from the Opera IT system?

Yes, if the outcome of the consultation is to refer the patient urgently, routinely or to their GP then a red tab will appear next to the patient details on the 'manage referrals' page, you will need to press on the red tab and it will take you through a short referral process. There is a page where you can upload any images, scans or VF / OCT reports to accompany the referral. You will then be asked to select the type of referral and the system will show you the services available for the patient, you will select one according to the patients choice and submit, this will then go directly to the provider / GP. If you are referring a patient to another practice at any stage of the CUES pathway (e.g. after screening / after face to face etc) then you will also have the red tab appear so that you can send it to the practice so they can add to the patient record.

There are different clinic types on the referral page, what do they mean and which one shall I select?

On the referral screen there are three drop down boxes, you only need to select an option from the first box (see below image) the remainder of the drop down lists pre-populate based on the referral reason:

I have an OCT and have completed a scan, how do I add this to the referral?

Most OCT's will allow you to export the DICOM file which includes the full scan, these can be added to a patient's referral and shared with the local ophthalmology department using the drag and drop function within Opera, or clicking on 'Choose a media file'. If your OCT does not allow you to export the DICOM file, you should attach slices showing the pathology leading to the referable pathology. If you are unable to export the full OCT scan as a DICOM file contact your sales rep to enquire about this feature.

I am an IP optometrist, can I prescribe within this service?

Primary Eyecare Services are working with CCGs to enable prescribing within this service. For further information on local agreements contact your clinical governance & performance lead (CGPL).

How to prescribe, question on Opera?

On each clinical form there is the option to record whether you have recommended / prescribed any medication, each area has a local agreement on the prescribing process so please ensure you are familiar with this, contact your CGPL for further information. When a medication is prescribed you have the ability to send the written order / FP10 notification to the patient (or Pharmacy where local protocol allows) via email or alternatively you can simple print and give to patient by accessing the documents from 'manage referral' screen (using the blue tab on far RHS of screen next to patient details).

In the current circumstances optical practices may in some areas be asked to stock and supply certain medications to support access to exemptions and minimise multiple points of contact.

Where you are an IP optometrist and seeing the patient face to face you will complete the telemedicine and select the outcome 'IP assessment at this practice' this will generate the Prescriber form.

I have screened a patient that needs an IP assessment or OCT assessment, my practice does not deliver this. How do I refer to IP/OCT?

When a patient has been identified as requiring IP or OCT assessment (or even another CUES provider if you do not have a clinician in on a particular day) you refer the patient to another provider via Opera as well as calling the practice to ensure they have capacity to see the patient in the appropriate timeframe. This can be done at any stage in the CUES pathway e.g. after screening / Telemedicine / face to face etc. When the outcome of on Opera is recorded as 'Refer to OCT via the DOS' a red tab will appears on the 'manage referrals' page showing 'Refer to OCT', 'Refer to Prescriber' or 'Refer to CUES' as you run through the process you will have a drop down list 'Reason for referral' from here you will choose the appropriate reason (e.g. CUES – OCT Provider) and then 'select provider', this will show the practices that deliver the service you have select with the nearest ones at the top of the list.

I am a locum and want to provide CUES in a number of practices, how do I do this?

When you register you are able to add the ODS codes for all of the practices you work at. This allows you to select the practice when you first log on. Locums who have already registered can find out information about adding more practice to their log in here:

https://help.optom-referrals.org/article/268-add-more-practices-to-login

What if my practice is forced to close due to a lockdown or staff shortages due to COVID?

Primary Eyecare Services maintain a register of open practices, if you need to close, please contact info@primaryeyecare.co.uk

Where can I order PPE?

Primary Eyecare Services and LOCSU have teamed up to provide PPE for optical practices, optical practices can order PPE supplies on the website below

https://primaryeyecaresupplies.co.uk/

You may also be eligible for Free PPE supplies via the NHS England arrangements recently announced with the use of an NHS mail account.

Do I need to ask the patient to complete a patient satisfaction questionnaire?

Patient satisfaction was suspended during the COVID period. The OPERA system allows Primary Eyecare Services to collect patient feedback via text message so there is no need for practices to complete patient satisfaction for the service.

A Patient has returned within 3 months, is this a new episode or a follow up?

If the patient returns for the same condition then this would be a follow up, if the patients returns with new symptoms that require further investigation then this will be a new assessment.

If a patient has been seen at another practice for CUES, can I access their records?

If the patient has been referred to your practice then the clinical record will be available in your worklist on 'manage referrals' page. We are working on the ability to view all previous history for the patient via a single patient record regardless whether they have been formally referred to you, due to the rapid implementation this is still being developed.

I have seen a patient with abnormalities that may relate to a COVID-19 infection, what do I do?

Refer the patient within the timescale recommended by your local ophthalmology department flagging the patients COVID related status and report the illness to your local health protection team
https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team